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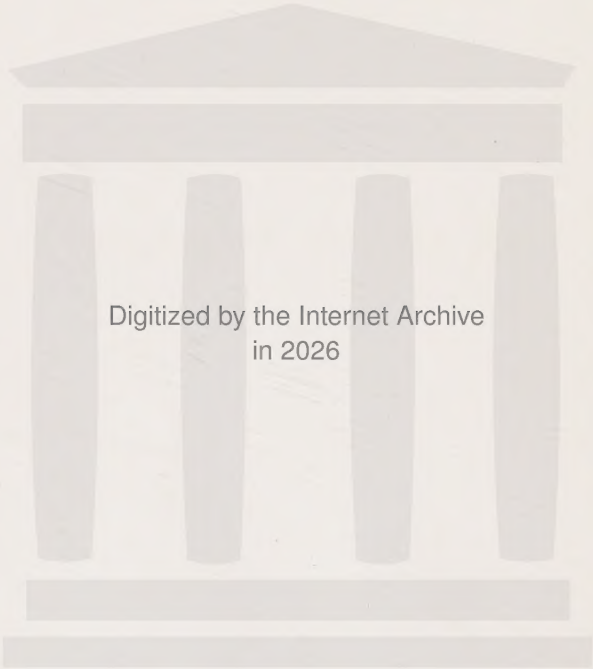
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THE GOLDEN MILESTONE

THE GOLDEN MILESTONE

BY

F. W. BOREHAM

AUTHOR OF

"FACES IN THE FIRE," "MUSHROOMS ON THE MOOR,"
"MOUNTAINS IN THE MIST," "THE LUGGAGE OF LIFE,"
"THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL,"
ETC., ETC.

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To

MY COMRADES,

THE OFFICERS OF MY CHURCH,

WHOSE UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE AND DELIGHTFUL FRIENDSHIP HAVE MADE MY MINISTRY BOTH

A SACRAMENT AND A REVELRY,

I DESIRE,

WITH RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

TO DEDICATE THIS BOOK

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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

But why an Introduction at all? Is an author under any obligation to apologize for his existence? After all, there are only three classes of people in the world—the people who will never hear of this volume of mine, the people who will be sorry to hear of it, and the people who will hear of it with pleasure. I need not trouble my head about the first, seeing that they do not trouble their heads about me. And the easiest way of defending myself against the second is to refer them to the third. For it is only because of the exceedingly generous reception accorded to my earlier volumes that I have plucked up courage to appear again. Like the gentle Elia, 'I find this world a very pretty place to live in'; and, standing here, beside my golden milestone, I have tried to point out a few of the things that make it so lovable. If something I have said makes somebody somewhere more glad to be alive, I shall be inclined to forgive this truant pen of mine its inordinate garrulity.

FRANK W. BOREHAM.

PART I

I

SLEEPY HOLLOW

I believe in Sleepy Hollow! I do not live there; I only wish I did. But I believe in it. Sleepy Hollow is a capital place. I know that everybody laughs at it; but that is partly why I believe in it; for everybody has laughed, some time or other, at all the things in which I most steadfastly believe. Everybody laughed at Noah; everybody laughed at Nehemiah; everybody laughed at the prophets; everybody laughed at the martyrs; everybody is always laughing. Galileo and Columbus were laughed to scorn, and so is Sleepy Hollow. But they laugh best who laugh last. That is where Noah and Nehemiah, Galileo and Columbus, score. And that is precisely the point at which poor Sleepy Hollow will triumph over its feverish and neurasthenic deriders. Once more, therefore, I set boldly down this fine and fundamental article in my personal creed: *I believe in Sleepy Hollow.* The world would be a poor place without it. Even

Washington Irving, who first awakened in us a desire to explore the drowsy valley, and who told us the worst that there is to be told, confessed to a lingering fondness for the quiet spot. 'I mention this peaceful place with all possible laud,' he says, 'for it is in such retired little valleys that population, manners, and customs are preserved from destruction.' And he likens them to little nooks of still water, on the border of a rapid stream, where we may see the straw and bubble riding quietly at anchor, or slowly revolving in their mimic harbour, undisturbed by the rush of the current. *Yes, I believe in Sleepy Hollow.* Indeed, I not only believe in it, but I require others to believe in it. If a man applies for membership in a Christian church, the minister of that church should get to close quarters with him by asking him one pertinent and penetrating question. 'Do you sleep well?' he should inquire. It is no good going on to discuss matters of detail until that cardinal and essential point has been settled. 'Do you sleep well?' let the minister ask, looking steadily the while into the eyes of the candidate. Everything hinges on the response to that one searching and spiritual inquiry. I do not go so far as to say that an unsatisfactory reply to that question should doom his application. But if he is compelled to confess that his home does not stand in Sleepy Hollow, he should

be regarded as a weaker brother, and should be carefully watched, admonished, and ministered to until he is able to assure his minister that he can sleep like a top.

Why do we send missionaries to the heathen? Why, indeed, but to teach the people how to sleep? The essential difference between a Christian and a cannibal is that a Christian knows how to go to sleep, and a cannibal doesn't. If I want a good laugh I turn to *Punch* or Boswell—it matters little which. If Boswell happens to be the handier, I turn to the page on which the poor biographer, never afraid of making himself the ridiculous foil against which his hero may show to advantage, tells us how he once submitted to the great man the proposition that a savage life was happier than a civilized one. The doctor simply roared in his fury, and almost drove his companion from the room. A savage life, he declared angrily, was animalism, misery, and sleeplessness; and whoever dared to affirm the contrary was a fool and was talking nonsense. Boswell pleaded piteously that Rousseau talked such nonsense. 'Yes, sir,' stormed the doctor, 'but Rousseau knew that he was talking nonsense, and laughed at the world for staring at him!' One feels very sorry for poor little Boswell, cowering beneath this terrible outburst: but at the same time one is bound to

recognize that he richly deserved his castigation The men who know are all on the doctor's side. Here is James Chalmers, the apostle of New Guinea. If any man knew savagery at first hand, he did. 'A savage seldom sleeps well,' he says, hitting off the whole situation, as it now concerns us, in five plain words. 'A savage seldom sleeps well at night. The state of terror in which he lives is truly pitiful. He dreads ghosts and hobgoblins. He is startled by leaves falling, lizards chirping, birds singing; and, besides, there are *embodied* spirits he has good cause to fear. Savage life is not the joyous hilarity that many writers would have us to understand.' Livingstone was impressed by the same thing in Central Africa. The natives wore a haunted look, and their eyes were furtive with suspicion. They were enslaved by the terror that walketh by night, and restfulness was out of the question. 'Give us sleep, *sleep*, SLEEP!' they seemed to cry. The chief Monze begged Livingstone to send a white man to live among his frightened people; and his sister seconded him, exclaiming that it would be a joy beyond expression '*to sleep without dreaming of any one pursuing one with a spear.*' Here, then, from New Guinea and from Central Africa, and from all the wilds of the world, comes that pitiful, pathetic, heartrending cry: 'Give us sleep, *sleep*, SLEEP!' Did I exaggerate

when I said that our missionaries go to the heathen to teach them how to sleep? Be sure that a cannibal would never laugh at Sleepy Hollow. To him Sleepy Hollow would seem to be next door to Paradise.

The moral and spiritual significance of sleep can scarcely be overestimated. I fortify myself at this point by an appeal to Victor Hugo, and Victor Hugo was a philosopher. He is describing Jean Valjean in the act of robbing the good bishop who had pitied him in his distress, and had admitted him to the hospitality of his home and the confidence of his heart. In creeping through the silent and darkened house, the culprit came to the bed on which the bishop slept. 'A moonbeam passing through the tall window suddenly illuminated the bishop's pale face. He was sleeping peacefully, his head thrown back on the pillow in an easy attitude of repose, and his hand, which had done so many good deeds, hung out of the bed. His entire face was lit up by a vague expression of satisfaction, hope, and beatitude—it was more than a smile, and almost a radiance. He had on his forehead the inexpressible reflection of an invisible light, for the soul of a just man contemplates a mysterious heaven during sleep. A reflection of this heaven was cast over the bishop, but it was at the same time a luminous transparency, for the heaven was *within* him,

and was *conscience.* Jean Valjean was standing in the shadow, with his crowbar in his hand, motionless and terrified by this luminous old man. He had never seen anything like this before, and such confidence horrified him. *The moral world has no greater spectacle than this, a troubled, restless conscience, which is on the point of committing a bad action, contemplating the sleep of a just man.*' The moral world, says the brilliant Frenchman, has no greater spectacle than this! No statement that I have made is half so sweeping as that!

I have quoted Victor Hugo for the sake of the philosophy of that golden sentence. The illustration in itself is inconclusive, seeing that it is taken from romance. And so, beside that scene taken from French fiction, I place an almost identical scene taken from English history. An hour or two before the execution of the Earl of Argyle, one of the traitor lords came to the castle and asked to see his lordship. 'He was told,' Macaulay says, 'that he was asleep. The visitor thought this was a subterfuge, and insisted on entering. The door of the cell was softly opened, and there lay Argyle on the bed, sleeping, in his irons, the placid sleep of infancy. The conscience of the renegade smote him. He turned away sick at heart, ran out of the castle, and took refuge in the dwelling of a lady of the family living hard by. There he flung

himself on a couch, and gave himself up to an agony of remorse and shame. His kinswoman, alarmed by his looks and groans, thought that he had been taken with some serious illness, and begged him to drink a cup of sack. "No, no," he said, "that will do me no good." She prayed him to tell her what had disturbed him. "I have been," he said, "in Argyle's prison. I have seen him, within an hour of eternity, sleeping as sweetly as ever a man did! But as for me——"' Now is not this an exact counterpart to the scene in *Les Misérables*? And is it not an abundant confirmation of Victor Hugo's affirmation that 'the moral world has no greater spectacle than this, a troubled, restless conscience, which is on the point of committing a bad action, contemplating the sleep of a just man'? That golden saying should be learned by heart.

The Church, of course, is the true Sleepy Hollow. She has excelled in the production of heroic and magnificent sleepers. That is why I insist that every candidate for her membership should be searchingly questioned as to his ability to sleep. We must not imperil her great reputation. Think of David, in the most heartrending crisis of his eventful life, flying from the sword of his own rebellious son, yet flinging his tired body on the hard ground and sleeping like a little child! 'I will both lay me down in peace and sleep,' he says

overnight, 'for Thou, Lord, only, makest me to dwell in safety.' And in the morning he rubs his eyes, refreshed, and says, 'I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.' And what shall we say of Daniel, sleeping among his lions, or of Peter, chained to his guards, awaiting execution, but slumbering deliciously until the angel awoke him? And surely that lovely picture of the Divine Sleeper in the fishing-boat on Galilee, at rest in the midst of the storm, is intended to be typical of much. I like to remember, also, that the night before Latimer and Ridley lit at Oxford that candle which has never been put out, Ridley's anxious brother offered to spend that last terrible night with them. 'No, no, brother,' smiled the Bishop, 'I mean to lie down and sleep as gently as ever I did!' And, to the amazement of the warders who kept guard, he was as good as his word, rising in the morning from his quiet slumber to greet the flames that bore his soul to the skies! Great sleepers, these! Poor George Stephenson, when he was building the Menai Tubular Bridge, used to say that he went to bed at night with those gigantic tubes and girders, and was still staggering under them when he rose in the morning. We are too prone to that sort of thing. We need to take lessons of Sir William Cecil, once Lord Treasurer of England, who, on throwing off his gown at night, used to

say to it, 'Lie there, Lord Treasurer!' and forgot all the cares of State until he resumed his official garb in the morning. We are such poor sleepers because we are such poor saints.

The best things all come to Sleepy Hollow. Among the piles of ponderous military traditions that cluster about the personality of Frederick the Great of Prussia is one rather pretty little story. The Emperor one day rang his bell, but it was not answered. The King went out and found the boy who should have answered the summons fast asleep. Beside the lad was a letter from his mother. 'My dear boy,' it said, 'thank you for the money you have sent me. God will bless you for it.' Frederick was pleased, went to his room, brought back a handful of ducats, and slipped them into the pocket of the sleeping page. When the little fellow woke up and felt the coins in his pocket, he was very frightened, and went and told the King. 'It is all right,' said Frederick; 'it is for your mother and yourself. In your little Bible there is a text that says that *God gives to His beloved in their sleep*. Now you understand what it means!' And so *I believe in Sleepy Hollow*. They may laugh at its repose who laughed at the great souls who slumbered there; but I am convinced that, if I can learn its restful secret, there will enter into my life a great and wonderful enrichment.

II

A FAGGOT OF THUNDERBOLTS

EMERSON says that Man is a faggot of thunderbolts. I do not quite catch his meaning. Perhaps he did not quite catch it himself. But that is neither here nor there. The general impression is unmistakable. Those who have gone more than once to cinematograph exhibitions know that there is one film that is never omitted. It is never omitted because it makes such an effective and irresistible appeal. And it makes such an effective and irresistible appeal because it contains so strong and so subtle an element of truth. It is true that it is called 'a comedy,' but so was Dante's tremendous masterpiece; and the one is almost as crammed with philosophy as the other. The film of which I speak represents a man whom nothing can destroy. You see him on the deck of a sinking ship. The vessel founders. But, as soon as she settles down upon

the ocean-bed, you see him calmly leave the wreck and proceed to thrid his way through the ocean forestry until he walks ashore. Again, you see him caught in a burning building. He is cut off by the pitiless flames and burned to a cinder. But, as soon as the building is reduced to a mass of charred ruins, you watch him scramble out from among the smouldering débris, and walk down the street as though nothing had happened. He is struck by a shell in the thick of a battle and blown to fifty thousand pieces; but those scattered fragments once more rush together, and he emerges from the scene unharmed and triumphant. The audience always goes into transports over this film. And, as I have said, its appeal consists, not in its absurdity, nor in its humour, but in its truth. And the truth that this fantastic film conveys is, of course, the truth that the Emersonian epigram conveys. Man is a faggot of thunderbolts. He is eternally sensational. He is for ever surprising you. And whenever you think you have come to the *end* of him, he shows you by incontestable evidence that you have only come to the *beginning* of him.

'Let us begin *at the beginning*!' said Mr. Wiseacre sagely.

'Nonsense! Let us begin *at the end*!' said Mr. Micawber; and he said it by every new twist and turn of his strangely eventful life.

And in this instance I am bound to say that Mr. Micawber is right. I know that there is an old superstition to the effect that the beginning of a thing comes before the end of a thing. It is very ridiculous; but, like so many of these ancient superstitions, it dies hard. The very reverse is, of course, the case. The end always precedes the beginning, always; and it is out of the end that the beginning slowly evolves. I know somebody who invariably reads the last pages of a novel before she sets out upon the first chapter. She likes to know how it all ends before she knows how it all begins. It is a blind instinct; but, like most blind instincts, it is a very true one. The end always comes first, and the beginning always comes last. That was the original order. The evening is the end of the day and the morning is the beginning of the day, and 'the evening and the morning were the first day.' The evening and the morning—the end and the beginning—made up the whole day. The Bible itself begins with an end—a world in ruins, a race played out. And it proceeds grandly to a beginning. 'Behold,' we read at the close, 'behold I make all things new.' So there, on the first page of the Bible, you have a tragic and catastrophic end; and there, on the last page of the Bible, you have a fair and beautiful beginning. And between that end at the beginning, and that beginning at the end, you have all the

unfoldings and developments of revelation and of grace.

I really believe that, if a visitor from Mars were suddenly to light upon this planet, none of our extraordinary antics or bewildering contrivances would astound him half as much as our infinite capacity for leaving our ghastly tragedies behind us and calmly beginning afresh. It stands out from all our other achievements as a mountain stands out from the molehills. It is the most audacious phenomenon in the solar system. Man is simply endless; you can never exhaust him; he breaks out in a fresh place and begins all over again. His endings always lead to beginnings, his dark evenings to cloudless mornings. He is like the proverbial cat with her nine lives, except that in his case the paltry numeral must be indefinitely multiplied. He is like the phoenix of mythology; you can burn him to ashes, but he will rise most gloriously from the smouldering embers and turn his face once more to the skies. He is like Drummond's monkey that would not kill: he is always startling you by his unexpected appearances and his new tricks. Napoleon said that the worst of the English was that they never knew when they were beaten. Just at the critical moment at which, by every law of military etiquette, they ought to have owned themselves conquered and have surrendered to their foes, they simply adopted some entirely

new tactics and drove their antagonists from the field. The English may, in this respect, be sinners above all men on the face of the earth; but it is only a matter of degree. The peculiarity is really not national; it is racial. It is nothing less than the very sign and hallmark of our humanity. To quote Nietzsche's famous phrase, 'Man is a recurring decimal.' He will never work out. You may divide and divide to your heart's content, but each fresh product of your arithmetic leaves you as far as ever from finality. Each figure, so far from being the end, is simply a new beginning. It starts the whole thing going again. Man is invincible, impregnable, invulnerable, indestructible. You think that you have thrown him down; but he will bounce like a ball. You fancy that you have killed and buried him; but he will rise from the dust and laugh at you. In his *Life of Milton*, Mark Pattison tells us that, at the age of forty-three, blindness fell upon the poet like the sentence of death, and he fancied for awhile that he had reached the end of everything. His only gleam of comfort lay in the fact that he had written, during his last year of eyesight, a pamphlet on the civil war! 'He could not foresee,' his biographer remarks, 'that in less than ten years his pamphlet would be merged in the obsolete mass of civil war tracts, and only be mentioned because it had been written by the author of *Paradise*

Lost! Yet so it was. Milton began life all over again in the darkness and gave us the work that has secured him deathless fame. That is Man all over. He is the most inveterate and incorrigible beginner that the universe has seen He is a faggot of thunderbolts.

Mr. Chesterton says that Dickens is a mob. And when one thinks of the jostling conglomeration of fantastic creations that haunt the mind as one calls to memory his innumerable characters, there does seem to be some justification for the opprobrious epithet. But from out that surging multitude of fearful and wonderful fantasies there emerges the splendid and satisfying figure of Mr. Micawber. It is more true to human nature than all the rest put together. Sir A. W. Ward thinks that, in the person of Mr. Micawber, Dickens was caricaturing his own father. Mr. Bensusan sees in Mr. Micawber a delineation of the personal oddities of Coleridge. Somebody else fancies that Leigh Hunt was aimed at. There is no need to quarrel about it. Mr. Micawber is the one classical and immortal representation of all men in general but of no man in particular. Mr. Micawber represents the race. He is always at his last gasp, always at the fag end of himself, always covering himself with dust and ashes. Yet he is always expecting something to turn up, always making gallant preparations for a

new beginning, always certain that he is just about to launch out on a prosperous and triumphant career. Take, by way of example, the last letter written in England. The poor man has been arrested for one of his innumerable debts. He is plunged into the depths of despair. 'The fair land of promise lately looming on the horizon is again enveloped,' he writes, 'in impenetrable mists, and for ever withdrawn from the eyes of this drifting wretch whose doom is sealed.' He goes on to observe, in his characteristically pompous pathos, that 'some poor traveller, visiting, from motives of curiosity, not unmingled, let us hope, with sympathy, the place of confinement allotted to debtors in this city, may, and I trust will, ponder as he traces on the wall, inscribed with a rusty nail, The Obscure Initials W.M.' Here is Mr. Micawber at the *end* of himself. But there is a postscript, and in the postscript Mr. Micawber is at the *beginning* of himself again. He reopens the letter, he explains, to say that 'the debt is paid, that he is at the height of earthly bliss,' and that he is just about to sail for Australia to inaugurate a career of opulence and glory! The end has proved to be but the beginning of a beginning. The phoenix rises gloriously from her ashes. Time after time the waves completely submerge poor Mr. Micawber, but time after time he bobs up again like a cork. Charles Dickens' delineation of

the invincible buoyancy of Mr. Micawber is one of the most life-like and realistic strokes that any brush or pen has ever contributed to the art or literature of the world. And it is at the same time one of the finest possible illustrations of the principle with which I set out. Mr. Micawber's endings always preceded Mr. Micawber's beginnings. And it was out of the end that the beginning invariably evolved. His gloomy evening and his radiant morning always made up his whole day.

Now the question is: Where did Man learn this extraordinary trick of getting mornings out of evenings—of getting beginnings out of endings? A conjurer's skill in getting rabbits and pigeons out of empty hats is simply nowhere in comparison. Where did Man learn this trick? And, when I come to face that question, I am shut up to one answer. The art is a *divine* one, and Man is merely copying his Maker. God is for ever and for ever beginning again. He is for ever and for ever getting new mornings out of old nights, fair beginnings out of dismal endings. Who are these boys that I see in my Bible —Joseph and Moses and Samuel and David and Jesus? Little boys do not figure prominently in other sacred writings. Each of these children represents a new morning for a world whose sun had set. Think of the condition of things when Joseph was born, when Moses was born, when Samuel was

born, when David was born, when Jesus was born. Things were played out ; the world was spent ; civilization was choking in the darkness and stifling in the night. And in those boys God began all over again and brought morning out of evening. And He is at it still. ' A new universe is created,' as Jean Paul Richter taught us, ' every time a little child is born into the world.' When you hear the cry of a little child it is the voice of the watchman saying once more, ' The Morning Cometh ! The Morning Cometh ! '

It was along the road that we have just travelled that the gospel came. There is a touching picture in the Psalms representing David, as an old man, looking wistfully back across the years and sighing for his lost innocence. Power had come to him and eminence, but where were the simplicity and purity that were his when he kept his father's sheep ? And then he magnifies the grace that has so greatly forgiven everything. A new morning has been brought out of his soul's dark night. ' *My youth is renewed like the eagle's !* ' he cries. He remembers how, in his early days on the grassy hillside, he watched the eagle as she built her nest, tore the down from her breast, and battered herself into ugliness in her fight for food for her young. And then the moulting season followed the breeding season. For awhile he saw her no more. And when she

reappeared she was a thing of beauty and of glory, her fresh plumage glittering in the sunlight. *'My youth is renewed like the eagle's!'* he cries in a fine ecstasy. Morning had evolved from night; a fair beginning had come out of a dismal and tragic ending. Paradise Regained had followed upon Paradise Lost. And David wrote this fine song of his restored innocence.

From its first page to its last the New Testament insists that the end always precedes the beginning. Look at the two typical stories of the Prodigal Son and Nicodemus. The Prodigal came to the fag end of his lost self before the beginning of things appeared to him. His evening and his morning made up the whole day. And the whole trouble with Nicodemus was his ridiculous assumption that the beginning comes before the end, and that beyond that end there can be no beginning. 'How can a man be born again when he is old?' he pathetically inquires. How can a man begin, that is to say, just when he is ending? And, with an exquisitely tender touch, Jesus showed how the morning always blossoms out of the evening, the new day out of the old night; and the aged ruler never forgot. Sam Hadley tells us that, down in Water Street, this was the one rule that was regarded as fundamental. However frequently a man relapsed into his old vices, he was always told that his

collapse was not an ending but a beginning; it was the dark night out of which the new day-dawn could arise. It reminds us of that great passage with which Joseph Gurney comforted the last moments of the dying Wilberforce: 'Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold.' The bird that seems to be dying in its nest is really pluming his wings for still loftier flight. The soul of man is a packet of surprises, a faggot of thunderbolts.

In her little cottage in the Highlands old Janet was dying. As the death-sweat gathered on her wrinkled brow, the words that she had learned in childhood, and cherished through all her lustier years, rushed back like a flood upon her memory, and she recited text after text. At last Mary, her neighbour, who had come up the glen to nurse her old friend at her 'flitting,' heard her say to herself again and again, 'I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord. *I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord.*' 'Ah, yes, Janet, ye're deein'!' said Mary, anxious that Janet should sustain herself on no false hope. A look of ineffable pity, almost amounting to contempt, swept over the dying woman's face, and she muttered under her breath, 'She kens naething aboot it! *She kens naething aboot it!*' *Mary* was clinging to the old superstition that the beginning

comes first and the end last. But *Janet* had learned the eternal secret that the evening and the morning make up the whole day, and that she was moving out of the dusk into the day that is everlasting.

III

THE FIRST SWALLOW

YESTERDAY afternoon I saw the first swallow of another summer! It was one of those fragrant and delicious spring days that seem to have all the ecstasy and song of summer-time dancing through their tranquil hours. The grass was a sheen of emerald—greener than any tint that a painter would dare to place upon his canvas. Just beyond, the river shimmered in the sunshine. And suddenly, skimming gracefully along the grass, and circling over the water, touching first the one and then the other with a camel-hair delicacy, my swallow darted. I could see that it was very, very happy to be back again, and I was no less delighted to welcome it. For, although this Tasmanian winter, through which we have just passed, is an extremely mild affair, and scarcely worth calling winter, yet we welcome the swallows with all the old-time rapture. And surely this is one of the world's deathless tendernesses—this

matter of the swallows' departure and return. I suppose we have all fallen in love with Kingsley's old gamekeeper at Allfowlsness. 'He was as good an old Scotchman as ever knit stockings on a winter's night. He lived all alone upon the Ness, in a turf hut thatched with heather and fringed round with great stones slung across the roof by bent ropes, lest the winter gales should blow the hut right away. He minded but two things in all the world, and those were his birds and his Bible.' And we remember how, when the autumn winds began to blow, and the migratory birds plumed their wings for their long southern flight, the old man would toddle out upon the moor, leaning heavily upon his stick the while, take off his cap to them, and wish them a merry journey and a safe return. Then he gathered up some of the feathers they had left, and went back to read and knit by his winter fire, and to wait patiently for the return of his feathered companions.

Now since watching my swallow by the riverside yesterday I have been trying to analyse these poignant emotions that are aroused in autumn and in spring-time by the going and the coming of the swallows. I am convinced that, when I see the swallows leaving the russet autumn, and preparing for their northward flight, there is something deeper in my sadness than a mere shrinking from a winter

that is too mild to have any terrors. And I am equally certain that the keen delight that is mine when my heart leaps up to greet the first swallow in August is far greater than a smug relief at the passing of the cold.

Now it happens that a second pleasurable experience yesterday followed fast upon the heels of the first. For in the evening I was invited to attend a cinematograph entertainment, and I went. I could not help comparing and contrasting the riverside experience of the afternoon and the pleasure of the pictures at night. The swallow completely satisfied me; the pictures, although excellent in themselves, quite failed to do so. Now why this thusness? What was the difference between the pleasure that I found in seeing the swallow skim, with camel-hair touch, over the green, green grass, and the pleasure that I found in the pictures in the darkened hall? There is an essential difference. The real intensity of my happiness depends, as Sir Launfal discovered, upon the extent to which it is shared. The pleasure that I feel as I watch the first swallow is a pleasure that I share with almost everybody; the pleasure that I feel as I watch the flickering films is a pleasure that I share with almost nobody. It is true that on the river-bank I was alone, and that the hall at night was crowded; but, over against that, I remember that when I passed into

the darkened hall to see the pictures I said good-bye to all the ages. Plato never saw a picture show; Paul never saw a picture show; Oliver Cromwell never saw a picture show; Mr. Gladstone never saw a picture show. As I glanced around these shelves of mine before going to the entertainment, I realized that I was cutting the painter that united me with these heroic spirits here. Tennyson and Carlyle, Dickens and Thackeray, Macaulay and Gibbon never went to picture shows! By laughing and crying over these realistic representations I am cutting myself clean off from all antiquity, from all history, and even from my own ancestry. My grandfather and grandmother never went to a picture show! And for aught I know, I am exposing myself to the contempt and ridicule of posterity as well. My grandchildren may laugh at me if they hear that I went to see a contrivance that may seem to them so old-fashioned and clumsy. The picture show separates me from everybody; but the swallow links me up with everybody. A book was recently written by George Demetrios, a Greek lad who had lately settled in Boston. He grew up in Macedonia, not far from Mount Olympus. It was under the shadow of Mount Olympus, we recall, that Paul did some of his best work. Well, George Demetrios calls his book *When I was a Boy in Greece* 'On March the first,' he tells us, 'the Greek boys celebrated the

return of spring. We went from house to house with a carved wooden swallow at the end of a stick, and sang the song that Sappho herself may have heard:

> She is here! she is here!
> The swallow that brings in the beautiful year!
> Wide open the door!
> We are children again; we are old no more!

The pleasure that I feel, therefore, when I watch the swallow in spring-time is a pleasure that I share with all the world and all the ages. Plato smiled as he greeted his first swallow every year; Paul saw the swallows just as, and just where, Demetrios saw them; Cromwell saw the swallows and revelled in the sight. And Mr. Gladstone felt happier when he welcomed back the birds. I glance round my shelves again, and I remind myself that Tennyson and Carlyle, Dickens and Thackeray, Macaulay and Gibbon all saw the swallows, and loved to see them. My grandfather and my grandmother used to delight in the swallows and their nests under the eaves. And I know that my children, and my children's children, to a hundred generations will share with me the rapture that I feel as I watch the earliest swallows of spring. The swallow links me with all the men and women who have ever lived, or ever will live; and half the pleasure that I feel

is in the sense of fellowship, communion, fraternity, which is so subtly and indefinably suggested.

It is a wonderful thing, this migratory instinct that makes the swallows come and go. The more men ponder it, the more marvellous it seems. Of late years a good deal of attention has been devoted to the wandering habits of migratory birds, and some particularly interesting facts have been elicited. But we were late in waking up to the fact that these feathered gipsies bear mystic messages from land to land. Had we opened our eyes a little earlier, the entire history of the world would have had to be very differently told. For instance, we celebrated, not so long ago, the centenary of Napoleon's tragic retreat from Moscow. And it is instructive to recall Frank Buckland's tremendous assertion that, had the apparently insignificant warnings of migratory birds been heeded in 1812, the whole course of empire would have been switched into another channel. 'For,' he says, 'if the Emperor Napoleon, when on the road to Moscow, had condescended to observe the flights of storks and of cranes passing over his fated battalions, subsequent events in the politics of Europe might have been different. These storks and cranes knew of the coming on of a great and terrible winter. The birds wisely hastened towards the south; Napoleon rashly hurried his army towards the north.' And that way came disaster.

But, of all migratory creatures in the animal kingdom, Man is himself by far the most extraordinary and erratic. Other species have, for the most part, their peculiar haunts and homes. You will find the elk and the reindeer on the snowy plains of Lapland; you will find the tiger in the jungles of Bengal; you will find the grizzly bear among the crags and fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains; you will find the buffalo on the broad western prairies; you will find the kangaroo in our own Australian bush. The birds of the air and the fish of the sea follow the same law. At most, like the swallows, they swing to and fro, summering here and wintering there. But Man you will find everywhere. He is a master migrant. He scorns all the limits that temperature and climate impose on other creatures. Neither Polar snows nor equatorial suns deter him in his restless wanderings and incongruous settlements. He comes like a ghost upon the Arctic foxes and the Polar bears as he bursts amidst their ice and snow. He startles the elephant and the lion as he crosses the Equator. The antelope and the giraffe fly in terror before him across the veldt. The meek-eyed camel looks round at him in surprise as he sets out in its company across the desert. The sea-fowl scream around his head as he negotiates the oceans. North, south, east, and west—he is everywhere. He is as much

a land animal as the ox or the horse. With his magnificent liners, his fine submarines, and his splendid battleships he is as much a sea animal as the porpoise or the whale. With his aeroplanes and balloons he is as much at home in the air as the bat or the flying fox. He soars higher than the eagle; he travels faster than the deer; he burrows deeper than the mole. The passion of the infinite is in his blood. He accommodates himself, in the course of a generation or two, to all conceivable circumstances and conditions. Indeed, it is by this inveterate habit of migration that he contrives to achieve his most splendid destiny. The nations that have centralized have decayed. The nations that have colonized have risen to imperial greatness. The Australian and American peoples are impressive monuments to the wisdom of directing man's inborn passion for migration into wise and remunerative channels. It is because Great Britain deliberately set herself to build up across the seas vigorous young communities which, protected by her power, enriched by her commerce, educated by her history, and inspired by her prestige, have continued of one life, one blood, and one interest with herself, that she has become the most magnificent Empire in the long pageant of the world's history.

But the best word about the swallows remains

to be said. *Why does the swallow migrate?* How does the swallow know when to turn its face to the ocean? How does it know in which direction to go? I do not know. And, what is more, the swallow does not know! Yes, that is the beauty of it—the swallow does not know. You tell me that the swallow knows *instinctively*. But what is instinct? You do not explain a thing, or lessen its mystery, by giving it a name.

A fire mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And a cave where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
A face turned from the clod—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

It is better—far better—to call it God and be done with it. And, in exactly the same way, there is this wondrous force that guides the swallow:

Some people call it instinct,
And others call it God.

It is better, I repeat, to call it God. Far better. Now at this point the study of the swallow becomes of vast importance to me. For in many respects I am very like the swallow. I move through life guided by a force that I cannot explain. By what

strange impulse was I impelled to follow this profession—this and no other? By what freak of fate did I marry this wife—this and no other? By what stroke of fortune did I settle in this land—this and no other? Looking back on life, it seems almost like a drift; we seem to have reached this position by the veriest chance. And yet it has all turned out too well to be the result of chance. The fact is that like the swallow we acted instinctively. And that instinct was God! We say with Browning's Paracelsus:

> I see my way as birds their trackless way.
> I shall arrive! What time, what circuit first,
> I ask not: but unless God send His hail,
> Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
> In some time, His good time, I shall arrive:
> He guides me and the bird. In His good time!

And what of the greatest of all our migratory instincts—the instinct of immortality? For, after all, immortality is an instinct and not an argument. A few may think that they can prove it. But there are millions who, unable to *prove* it, nevertheless *feel* it. Lamartine, in his *History of the Girondists*, has a memorable passage in which he describes Vergniaud and his followers, at the end of their pitiful sufferings, waiting for the hour of execution. Vergniaud cheered his companions by reminding them of the evidences of immortality. And then

he concluded by asking, 'Are not we ourselves the best evidence of it? We who sit here in front of imminent death, yet calm, serene, impassive? What is it that gives us this power but the immortal spirit within?' On the other side of the Atlantic, Emerson told of two American senators who, each in his own way, spent twenty-five years in searching for evidence of the immortality of the soul. And Emerson marvels that they failed to notice that the impulse that prompted them to seek that evidence so patiently through all the years was in itself the strongest proof they could desire. I like to watch the swallow turn its face to the ocean, and set fearlessly out over the waters. If I had no other proof of lands beyond the sea, the instinct of the swallow would satisfy me. 'Sir,' says Emerson grandly, 'I hold that God who keeps His word with the swallows and the fishes in all their migratory instincts will keep His word with Man!' It was well and bravely spoken; and when my brain swims with the tiresome and tedious arguments of the schools, I shall think of the swallows, and shall pillow my tired head and weary heart on the great hope that their seaward flight affords me. 'Beautiful swallows!' Richard Jefferies fondly exclaims. 'Be tender to them, for they symbol all that is best in Nature and all that is best in our own hearts.' They do indeed.

IV

SPRING-CLEANING

We come now to a really great subject. As I approach its immensities, I feel my pen trembling between my fingers. As I think of all that it involves, I exceedingly fear and quake. It is a truly terrifying theme, and I need not say that I should never have had the temerity to select it for myself. Who am I that I should think myself capable of outlining its colossal proportions? As everybody must have guessed as soon as they caught sight of the frightful headline, I am writing under a constraint that is almost compulsion. A lady is, of course, at the bottom of the whole trouble. The woman tempted me and I did write. I do not mean that my wife nerved me to the stupendous enterprise. By no means. The painful fact is—if these unhappy domestic details must be ruthlessly disclosed—that my wife and I do not see eye to eye

on the matter of spring-cleaning. Every rose has its thorn, and even the witchery of spring-time is clouded for me by the thought of the unhallowed festival of the bucket and the broom. So, all through life, do the most poetical and the most prosaical conceptions intermingle. The snowdrops and the swallows come every year as the harbingers of the scrubbing-brush and the soft soap. In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love—and lumber. I am sure that, having heard without pity the plaintive protests which have been annually wrung from me as the horrible invasion threatened my inoffensive study, my wife would be the very last to urge me to rush into print on such a theme. My fair temptress writes from South Australia.

She does not ask me in so many words to deal with the subject of spring-cleaning. She is a woman, and therefore wonderfully wise. She knows that I am only a man, and therefore wonderfully weak. She does not even mention spring-cleaning, lest she should seem to wave a red rag at a bull. But even as she so tactfully allows for my weakness, so do I shrewdly allow for her wisdom, and behind her honeyed sentences I see exactly what she means. She means spring-cleaning! It seems that some time ago a lady friend of hers died. This lady left an enormous accumulation of letters and papers, of

clothes and of other odds and ends. It took weeks and weeks to sort these things out, and then the great mass of them had to be destroyed. 'I thought,' my correspondent goes on to say, in a charming outburst of womanly innocence and hopefulness, 'I thought that a word from you might set other hoarders to work giving away what they do not require, and destroying letters that are of no value.' The artistic genius which avoids the mention of spring-cleaning and which presents for my censure a culprit of her own sex, elicits my boundless admiration. With that, and a bow, I dismiss my correspondent and come to my theme.

And, like all the subjects with which ministers deal, it naturally divides itself into three parts! There is the *Pigeon-hole*; there is the *Waste-paper Basket*; and there is the *Fire*! As each mail arrives, I find myself automatically sorting it out under those three heads. There are only three classes of correspondence, and each goes to its own place. The coming of the postman precipitates a miniature Day of Judgement. If a letter is very bad, it is consigned to the flames of Perdition, and I watch the smoke of its torment curl up the dark and cavernous chimney. If it is very good, it is promoted to the Paradise of a pigeon-hole, and is invested with a promise of immortality. And if it is neither very bad nor very good, it goes to the Purgatory of the paper basket,

from whose abysmal depths there is, however, no gate of entrance into Paradise.

The waste-paper basket is, therefore, an intermediate state. Indeed, it is the finest emblem in the world of respectable and harmless mediocrity. It swallows up the things that are of no account. Advertisements, circulars, superfluous newspapers, formal letters of acknowledgement, and all kinds of things that will never be wanted again, and whose contents anybody may see, find their way to this waste-paper basket. The documents are not good enough for a pigeon-hole, and not bad enough for the fire. So here they go! And yet, looking at it in another way, there is something infinitely pathetic about the waste-paper basket. It is an asylum for documents whose day is done, and the close of whose careers is clouded by no sense of shame. They have no further work to do, so they need not climb up to the pigeon-holes. They hold no guilty secrets, so they need not be flung to the flames. They have finished their course modestly, honourably, and well; and their rest is the rest of the twilight.

And now the time has come to gently chide this fair correspondent of mine. With feminine enthusiasm she is deeply enamoured of the fire, and is devotedly attached to the waste-paper basket—I intend no charge of coquetry—but she treats the

pigeon-hole with withering disdain. But this will not do. There are letters that must go to the pigeon-hole—her own for example. It would have seemed like sacrilege to have acknowledged the letter, crumpled it up, and flung it into the basket. I confess to a weakness for the pigeon-hole. If I catch myself wavering for a moment as between the paper basket and the pigeon-hole, I invariably give the fluttering missive the benefit of the doubt, and into the pigeon-hole it goes ! I have discovered that the pigeon-hole is not only a useful but a sacred place. These little squares in front of me are like little chapels, and an atmosphere of reverence and tenderness broods over them. I have here, for example, a bundle of old letters that are very dear to me, and that grow dearer as the days go by. They are all of them from those whom I have loved long since and lost awhile. Whenever I have received a characteristic letter from a friend, a letter that seems saturated in his spirit and echoing with the merriment of his laughter, I have found it impossible to destroy it. Some day, I know, others will scan it, burn it as rubbish, and blame me for not having saved them the trouble. But then, to me, the personality of my friend is woven into the letter, and my friend is mortal. And one day my friend will join the immortals, and I shall go through these piles of letters, and carefully, reverently

gather out his letters and transfer them to this sacred little bundle in the corner. The other day I heard of the death, away in East Africa, of my old friend, the Rev. J. J. Doke. He married me, and helped me in more ways than I can tell. His intimate friendship in our old New Zealand days is one of my most cherished memories. And now, in the course of a journey of exploration through Rhodesia, he has fallen, and added his name to the long, long list of Africa's illustrious dead. This morning I went through my hoard of letters, and was delighted to find some of his graphic and chatty epistles. And with chastened emotions, and with tender touch, I have transferred them to that priceless bundle. I do not know the age of my Adelaide correspondent. I would not dare to inquire. But she is not old. Nor am I. But I am discovering every year that I cherish with growing affection the precious documents in this rapidly increasing bundle. To re-read these letters is part of life's loftiest worship. It is only when I have shaken the dust of the world from off my spirit that I allow myself to break this seal, and enjoy unbroken fellowship with these pure and deathless ones. Those who sort out my paltry effects at the last may blame me for having accumulated such heaps of rubbish; but I entreat them to reflect, before they condemn me too harshly, on the

hallowed hours that I have spent with these spiritual radiations from out the everlasting.

Then, too, every minister treasures some letters whose re-reading is very sweet to him. They are from folk who have been helped by him. He will never burn them. In times of discouragement or public censure, he will read them and be comforted. Lord Milner, in his volume of speeches, says that he likes to store up the praise he receives for less cheerful days. 'Bank the praise when you get it,' he says, 'and live upon it when you do not get it, and do not make too much fuss either way.' That is a good word for the pigeon-hole.

Nor are these all. It is getting on for twenty years since I exchanged the Old World in the north for this New World beneath the Southern Cross. And never a single mail has reached Australia through all those years that did not bear a letter from my mother. Not one! And am I to be blamed that I have not found it in my heart to commit any one of those welcome messages to the paper basket or the flames? I know that I may never read again all these piles and piles of letters in that dear handwriting. I know, too, that a day must come when some other hands will consign these stacks of letters to the devouring flames. Let other hands do it, say I! It will cost them little enough, and it would almost break my heart.

And so I turn my pigeon-holes into cloisters and chapels. And often, as I sit here at my desk, I seem to hear, issuing from their shadowy recesses, the dear familiar voices of those I love so well mingling in sweet and solemn prayer. And they seem to pray for me; and even to hear them praying is to feel that their prayers are answered. And at other times, glancing at that other bundle, there come hushed and holy moments when I almost catch the far-off strains of heavenly harmonies rising as if from the lips of singers who gaze in rapture on the Father's Face.

But, for all that, my correspondent is right. I ought not to leave all the sorting-out for other hands to do. I should bravely tackle the annual ordeal to which the spring-time calls me. Heaps of these letters have no further meaning for me. They are from people who came, I scarcely know whence, and who went, I scarcely know whither. This accumulation of matter merely clogs my shelves and reduces the preciousness of the hoard as a whole. 'We ought to diminish the luggage of life,' an eminent surgeon said to the Rev. T. H. Darlow one day. 'If I had to begin over again, I would refuse to accumulate half my household possessions. They are not necessary, and they become a burden and a nuisance.' I would rather write a dozen articles, or preach a dozen sermons,

than set out upon the hideous undertaking ; but perhaps the very cost of the effort is simply an indication of its real value.

The march of civilization is simply a matter of spring-cleaning. As the world's old winter passes away, and the genial spring-time comes on, we instinctively throw away heaps of rubbish that have accumulated in the process of the dark old ages, and set up brighter and lovelier things. ' It is wonderful,' says Mr. H. G. Wells, ' how many of the clumsy and limited governing bodies of my youth have given place now to more scientific and efficient machinery.' The coming of the daisy and the daffodil, that is to say, have brought in the age of the soap and the scrubbing-brush. When the sunshine floods the room with summer glory it always exposes the cobwebs, and calls for a broom.

Education, too, properly considered, is merely another form of spring-cleaning. It is a cleaning-up of the mind. I unlearn and I learn. I fling out my mental rubbish and store my mind with what is really useful and beautiful. And even the highest and most spiritual forms of education answer to the same description. The man who knows how to forget all the things that are best forgotten, and to remember all the things that are best remembered, has mastered the high art of spring-cleaning. Faber has a striking sermon

on 'The Spiritual Advantages of a Short Memory.' It is really absurd to load the pigeon-holes of my mind with rubbish.

Let us forget the things that vexed and tried us,
The worrying things that caused our souls to fret;
The hopes that, cherished long, were still denied us
Let us forget.

Whatever things were good and true and gracious,
Whate'er of right has triumphed over wrong,
What love of God or man has rendered precious,
Let us remember long.

'Finish every day and be done with it!' says Emerson. 'You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities, no doubt, crept in; forget them as soon as you can. To-morrow is a new day; begin it well and serenely, and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense.' Here is spring-cleaning of a really exquisite kind.

And yet something still remains to be said. For, really and truly, life itself is merely a matter of spring-cleaning. It is not a bit of good cleaning up my study unless I also clean up my soul. The finest word ever uttered on this tremendous theme was spoken by Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, the brilliant young Frenchman. 'My only desire,' he wrote, 'is to improve myself in order to be worth a

little more every day, and to be able to look within myself without displeasure. I am going to sweep and garnish this inmost dwelling and to set up in it some true ideas, some good intentions, and a few sincere affections.' The man who knows how to spruce up his soul after that fashion will never have much trouble with his study. It is the pinnacle and climax of life's successes to possess a spirit unclogged by lumber, and tastefully adorned with 'true ideas, good intentions, and sincere affections.'

The Golden Age is ahead of us! Be sure of that! The world-high spring-time is coming! The swallows are everywhere! And depend upon it, when the everlasting spring rushes in and the never-withering flowers at last appear, the world's old cobwebs will be swept into the uttermost abyss. Sin and sorrow and sickness and sighing must all go, and not a thing that defileth will remain. The greatest prophecies on record concern themselves with that ineffable Spring-cleaning! Then the last dust must vanish and the daisies and the daffodils hold undisputed sway.

V

THE LITTLE PALACE BEAUTIFUL

THERE are only four children in the wide, wide world, and each of us is the parent of at least one of them. I will tell how I made the discovery. I was going along the road that Bunyan's pilgrim travelled, and was nearing the Delectable Mountains. As Christian and Hopeful drew near those glorious hills, with their gardens and their orchards, their fountains and their vineyards, they were in such terror, because of their recent adventure with Giant Despair, that they looked aside neither to the right hand nor to the left. That is how they missed the Little Palace Beautiful. It stands among the trees of the valley just off the main road. It is a palace in miniature. Such a dainty little dwelling! Such lovely flowers in the garden! Such a ceaseless chorus of song from all the forest around! It is like a nest beautifully built among the trees. And about the garden and the home

itself I saw the angels moving. They kept guard over it night and day. There are only four charming little rooms, and in those pretty rooms I found the children sleeping. And what I saw I here set down.

I

In a sunless room that faces the south, a room whose name is Fancy, I found THE LITTLE CHILD THAT NEVER WAS. And *the Little Child that Never Was* is an exquisitely beautiful child. He is the little child of all lonely men and lonely women, the child of their dreams and their fancies, the child that will never be born. He is the son of the solitary. Let me cite two instances as typical of many. The one shall be the case of a man and the other of a woman. Professor Herkless, in his *Life of Francis d'Assisi*, tells us how Francis was torn between the monastic life on the one hand and the domestic life on the other. He longed to be a monk and to dedicate himself to poverty and pilgrimage. And yet he loved a sweet and noble and gracious woman. He wrestled with his alternatives, and at length, through an agony of tears, he chose the cloak and the cowl. But still the lovely face haunted him by cloister and by shrine. And one radiant moonlit night, when the earth was wrapped

in snow, the brethren of the monastery saw him rise at dead of night. He went out into the grounds and, in the silvery moonlight, fashioned out of the snow with deft artistic fingers the images of a lovely woman and a group of fair little children. He arranged them in a circle, and sat with them, and, giving rein to his fancy, tasted for one delicious hour the ecstasies of hearth and home, the joys of life and love. Then, solemnly rising, he kissed them all a tearful and final farewell, renounced such raptures for ever, and re-entered the monastery. That night the deep impressive eyes of Francis looked full into the face of *the Little Child that Never Was.*

For womanhood let Ada Cambridge speak. In *The Hand in the Dark and Other Verses* she has a touching little poem that she calls 'The Virgin Martyr.' It might just as well have been called '*The Little Child that Never Was.*'

Every wild she-bird has nest and mate in the warm April weather,
But a captive woman, made for love, no mate, no nest, has she.
In the spring of young desire, young men and maids are wed together.
And the happy mothers flaunt their bliss for all the world to see.
Nature's sacramental feast for them—an empty board for me.

I, a young maid once, an old maid now, deposed, despised, forgotten—
I, like them, have thrilled with passion and have dreamed of nuptial rest,
Of the trembling life within me of my children unbegotten,
Of a breathing new-born body to my yearning bosom prest,
Of the rapture of a little soft mouth drinking at my breast.

Time, that heals so many sorrows, keeps mine ever-freshly aching.
Though my face is growing furrowed and my brown hair turning white.
Still I mourn my irremediable loss, asleep or waking;
Still I hear my son's voice calling 'Mother' in the dead of night,
And am haunted by my girl's eyes that will never see the light.

O my children that I might have had! My children lost for ever!
O the goodly years that might have been, now desolate and bare!
O God, what have I lacked, what have I done, that I should never
Take my birthright like the others, take the crown that women wear,
And possess the common heritage to which all flesh is heir?

I said that *the Little Child that Never Was* is a very beautiful child. He is absolutely without faults or flaws or disfigurements of any kind. He is all, *all*, ALL that his father, his mother, would have him to be. And he has a great work to do in

the world—that *Little Child that Never Was*. He will either sweeten the life of his poor lonely father or mother or else make it as bitter as wormwood. He will wonderfully soften or cruelly harden them. *The Little Child that Never Was* calls his solitary father and lonely mother to the service of the world's childhood. It is a great thing for the world that there are men and women with no children of their own. For there are little children without fathers and without mothers, and there are little children with fathers and mothers who would be better off if they had none. And the lonely men and women are called by *the Little Child that Never Was* to devote their lives to the service of the lonely little children. And in ministering to the world's childhood they will lose their loneliness and their longing, for *the Little Child that Never Was* will become incarnate in the little children around them, and they will hear his laughter and wipe away his tears after all.

II

In the room that faces the west and is flooded with the sunset glory, a room called Memory, I found THE LITTLE CHILD THAT WAS. And if Ada Cambridge has described *the Little Child that Never Was*, Josephine Dodge Daskam has done as much

for *the Little Child that Was*. It occurs in her poem on 'Motherhood.'

> The night throbs on; Oh, let me pray, dear Lord!
> Crush off his name a moment from my mouth.
> To Thee my eyes would turn, but they go back,
> Back to my arm beside me where he lay—
> So little, Lord, so little and so warm!
> I cannot think that Thou hadst need of him!
> He was so little, Lord, he cannot sing,
> He cannot praise Thee; all his life had learned
> Was to hold fast my kisses in the night.
> Forgive me, Lord, but I am sick with grief,
> And tired of tears and cold to comforting.
> Thou art wise, I know, and tender, aye, and good,
> Thou hast my child, and he is safe in Thee,
> And I believe—
> Ah, God, my child shall go
> Orphaned among the angels! All alone,
> So little and alone! He knows not Thee,
> He only knows his mother—give him back!

And *the Little Child that Was* is also an exquisitely beautiful child, a child that is always a child, a child that never grows up. I remember hearing a Sunday-school superintendent in England tell a story of a shepherd who could not get his flock to cross a narrow bridge that spanned a silver stream. At last he took a lamb in his arms and crossed. The mother instantly dashed across after him, and the whole flock scampered at her heels. I often think of the gentle story when I ponder on *the Little*

Child that Was. And *the Little Child that Was* also has a great work to do in the world. The classical example is the story of Mrs. Josephine Butler. We all remember with a shudder the story of that holiday—the father and mother in Europe, the little girlie left at home. And at last the night came when father and mother were expected. And in the night there was the sound of wheels and the commotion in the great hall below. The excited little daughter sprang from her bed, rushed out into the corridor, jumped up on to the banister rail to peer over and see 'dadda' and 'mamma' again. And then—the lost balance! the awful fall! 'Never,' says Mrs. Butler, 'never can I lose that memory, the fall, the sudden cry, and then the silence. It was pitiful to see her, helpless in her father's arms, her little drooping head resting on his shoulder, and her beautiful golden hair all stained with blood, falling over his arm. Would to God that I had died that death for her! If only we had been permitted one look, one moment of recognition!' Here, then, is a picture from life of *the Little Child that Was*! And we all know what resulted. Mrs. Josephine Butler could find no comfort until she rose from her grief and devoted herself to all the wayward and motherless daughters of the great world outside, and everybody who knows the story of that greatly heroic life for the world's

womanhood thanks God for that *Little Child that Was*. *The Little Child that Was* calls, not for sorrow, but for service.

III

In a room called Experience, a room that faces the north and gets all the sun, I found THE LITTLE CHILD THAT IS. What a wonder he is, to be sure! I am not surprised that people have asked, 'What are little boys made of?' Nor am I surprised at the divergence which has characterized the replies. But boys and girls are made neither of sugar and spice nor of snips and snails. *The Little Child that Is* is made up of Curiosity, Ambition, and Imagination. And these are all fine things. Curiosity, rightly developed, has led all our explorers across uncharted seas and untrodden continents, and has lured our scientists and inventors to their triumphs and their fame. But it needs educating. It is no good telling a child that he must not go to the cupboard. You only inflame his desire to go. You must satisfy him in some way, either that there is nothing in the cupboard that he needs, or that there is good reason why he should be forbidden from approaching it. The universe is full of wonderful and tantalizing cupboards. And half the damage done to fair young lives is caused through

our insane way of telling them on no account to look into a certain cupboard. 'Don't look at the cupboard!' 'Don't think of the cupboard!' 'Don't read of the cupboard!' we cry, until we have so aroused their innate curiosity that the forbidden cupboard becomes the one topic of their thought and speculation. The high art of training young people, all of whom are in the continental and most romantic stage of discovery, lies in the adoption of some sane and reasonable and satisfying attitude towards the world's wonderful cupboards.

The same is true of Ambition and Imagination. *The Little Child that Is* dearly loves to excel. He wants to win. And the wise parent will not seek to crush his pride of achievement, but to educate it. We must point him out the heights that are best worth climbing, the goals that are best worth reaching, the prizes that are best worth winning. And the culture of the Imagination, too, is surely well worth while. *The Little Child that Is* has an amazing creative faculty. He peoples every crack and crevice in the solar system with fairies and elves, hobgoblins and ghouls. It is the sense of the Infinite stirring within him. If only we could preserve it to him! What a world this would be if we had a touch of imagination left in it! Our churches are languishing for it. One flash of real imagination would save us from that detachment from reality which

is the secret of half our failure. The imaginative faculties of *the Little Child that Is* would enable us preachers to project ourselves into the real lives of our people and to say the things that would really help them. And the world needs it, too. 'I understand now,' says Mr. H. G. Wells, 'why modern electioneering is more than half of it denunciation. There is nothing constructive. That calls for the creative imagination, and few are able to respond to that call.'

Here, then, is your *Little Child that Is*! He is made up of these three priceless ingredients—Curiosity, Ambition, and Imagination. Crush his curiosity, and you will find him sinister, self-satisfied, knowing all he cares to know. Crush his ambition, and you will find him, hands in pockets, at the street corner. Crush his imagination, and you rob him of his power to lead this old world into new joys and new experiences. The father and mother to whom *the Little Child that Is* has come have already tasted of the bliss of heaven; but a fearful responsibility attends their rapture.

IV

And in a room whose window faces the east, the sunrise, a room called Hope, I found THE LITTLE CHILD THAT IS TO BE. A wonderful, wonderful

child is he—*the Little Child that Is to Be.* I often feel that I should like to take every young fellow in my congregation into this room that faces the sunrise and show him this sweet and slumbering angel-face. And as he looks down upon the head on the pillow I would say, 'Take care, when you are making love to the girl of your fancy, that you are securing for *the Little Child that Is to Be* a mother capable of maintaining the great and holy traditions of motherhood. Take care that you are winning to yourself a woman whom you can set with pride and confidence before the eye of *the Little Child that Is to Be* as the embodiment of all that is pure and noble and unselfish and true! And I often feel that I should like to take every girl in my congregation into this little room with the eastern window. And, as she gazed tenderly down into the sleeping face of *the Little Child that Is to Be,* I would say to her, 'Take care, when you ally yourself with the lover of your fancy, that you are securing for *the Little Child that Is to Be* a father to whom you may always point with proud motherly affection! Take care that you are setting before the eyes of *the Little Child that Is to Be,* when he wakes up, a father whose character he may copy and in whose safe footprints he may plant his own! Take care! Take care!' And I would have both young men and maidens, as they stand beside this sleeping angel, to

remember that whenever they yield to temptation they are striking a more terrible blow at *the Little Child that Is to Be* than they will ever be able to strike him with clenched fist. And whenever they resist and overcome temptation they are securing for *the Little Child that Is to Be* a finer heritage than any they will ever leave him in their wills. 'Take care, take care,' I would say to every man and maiden, 'take the greatest, tenderest care of *the Little Child that Is to Be*!'

V

I said when I began that these are the only four children in the wide, wide world, and that every one of us is the parent of at least one of them. That is so. Every man and woman on the face of the globe has a child of his own—one or other of these four. And a little child is always a leader. 'A little child shall lead them.' And be sure *the Little Child that Never Was, the Little Child that Was, the Little Child that Is*, and *the Little Child that Is to Be* have come stealing into all our hearts and all our homes that they may lead us, their dusty, world-stained fathers and mothers, out of our sins and out of ourselves to the dear feet of that Holy Saviour in whose radiant and gracious presence the little children always felt at home.

VI

ON GOOD-LOOKING PEOPLE

I MEAN, one of these days, to preach a special sermon to good-looking people. Indeed, I would do so at once if only I knew how to go about it. But my way is hedged about by difficulties. I hesitate to advertise my amiable intention, for, if it appears in the newspapers that, on such-and-such a date, I am to address myself to good-looking people only, I am afraid that all those who are *not* conspicuously beautiful will feel under a painful obligation to absent themselves, whilst a certain admirable modesty may prevent those who *are* fair of face and feature from putting in an appearance. It seems to me, therefore, that, if I publicly announce my project, my sermon to good-looking people may have to be delivered under the most dismal and depressing conditions. But I am confident that, one of these days, I shall see my

way through these perplexities, and my sermon to good-looking people will be duly delivered. Of one thing I am certain, it will be preached not a day too soon. For about twenty centuries we preachers have given these people a very bad time. We have looked with cold disdain upon their tall and handsome forms, their lithe and graceful figures, their sweet and winsome faces, their soft and silken tresses, and the glorious sparkle of their lovely eyes. And, in this contempt, we have been playing a lone hand. Perhaps the very fact that we have treated their charms with such icy indifference has evoked the compassion of others, and led them to atone most handsomely for our cruel silence. The poets have been swept off their feet by these paragons of loveliness, and the novelists have gone into ecstasies over the innumerable varieties of human beauty. Show me any work of fiction that does not somewhere describe, in the most glowing and perfervid language, the stately grace of its hero or the incomparable charm of its pretty heroine! I am not thinking of third-rate novels, brimming over with sickly sentimentality, but of the classics and masterpieces of our English literature. One has only to let his memory play for a moment about the dream folk he has loved in fiction, from Juliet to Lorna Doone, and from Sir Charles Grandison to Garth Dalmain, in order to convince himself of the immense place that good looks have

held in the world of his fancy. Now some sure instinct must have led our poets and littérateurs, with such striking unanimity, to this unstinted glorification of personal beauty. It was not done for pleasure or for padding. There was art in it, but there was something more than art. There was philosophy and humanness and common sense. These literary creators of ours made their characters lovely so that we should love them, and, all unsuspecting, we loved them first of all because they were so lovely. But the Church has never seemed to share this appreciation of fair faces and fine forms. We have been inclined to deride all personal enchantments. We have belittled human loveliness. We have told these good-looking people that it is all vanity and vexation of spirit. Beauty, we have assured them, is skin deep. And, somehow or other, the Church has held a sort of brief for ugliness. I have always felt that General Booth made the mistake of his life when he put his lassies into poke bonnets, and I am equally certain that the Papacy made its grossest and most egregious tactical blunder when it devised for its nuns the hideous garbs with which we are so familiar.

To say that 'beauty is only skin deep,' and that 'good looks are nothing to go by,' is a pitiful begging of the whole question. Money is not even skin deep,

and a man can be just as good without money as with it; but no sane man will deny that there is a considerable difference between being a pauper and being a millionaire. And that difference will affect at every turn the ordering of his daily life. Health is not indispensable, and a consumptive cripple may be every bit as devout a Christian as a swarthy athlete; but no honest man will maintain that health is a negligible quantity. It is nonsense to pretend that the man who feels the rush of life surging through every vein is no better off than the invalid whose malady compels him to lie still and cough. It is, of course, possible to argue that to whom much is given from him shall much be required, and that the millionaire and the athlete are therefore involved in a heavier responsibility than are the pauper and the cripple. If the Church takes that line of argument with my good-looking people, I shall not resist it. But I shall regard the very adoption of that argument as an admission on the Church's part that it is, after all, a very fine thing to be good-looking.

Nor is the Church quite alone in underrating the value of good looks. Charles Lamb, in his essay on 'Modern Gallantry,' promises to believe in chivalry as a fact of life when he sees 'the same attention paid to age as to youth, to homely features as to handsome, to coarse complexions as to clear.'

And he goes on to sing the praises of his old master, Joseph Paice. 'He was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have ever met,' the gentle Elia tells us. 'I have seen him stand bareheaded to a poor serving-girl, while she has been inquiring of him the way to some street, in such a posture of unforced civility as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance nor himself in the offer of it. I have seen him tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess. The roses that had long faded thence still bloomed for him in those withered and yellow cheeks.' Charles Lamb bore this beautiful witness to his old master a century ago, and I lay beside it a cutting from yesterday's newspaper. Here it is.

'"Oh, thank you," exclaimed the dear old lady, as a labourer surrendered his seat to her in a crowded tramcar, "thank you very much." "That's orl right, mum," was the rejoinder, and the old lady sat down, smiling sweetly at her horny-handed knight. He, for his part, returned this salute by what he thought was a polite and gracious nod. Then: "Wot I sez is," he added, "a man never ort to let a woman stand. That's wot I sez. Some men never gets up unless she's

pretty, but to me, mum, looks don't make no difference. A woman's a woman, even if she hain't a beauty. That's wot I sez.'' '

Now this is all very delightful, and I should feel like a wrecker of temples and a breaker of idols if I were to say a single word in its disparagement. I shall attempt nothing so iconoclastic. But I do respectfully submit that one essential fact is ignored. That fact is that there are two kinds of chivalry—the chivalry that is *instinctive* and the chivalry that is *acquired*. The attentions that we pay to good-looking people, because they are good-looking, are prompted by an *instinctive* chivalry. A young man rises and offers his seat to a pretty girl in the tram-car, not because it is his duty so to do, but because there is something very delightful in receiving her smile as she accepts it. There is nothing at all wrong in this ; it is perfectly natural ; it is the tribute that we instinctively offer to beauty. But let us suppose that, instead of the pretty girl, a woman of quite another type enters the car. She is negligently dressed ; her hair is unkempt and dishevelled ; her face is coarse, repulsive, and sour. The young man will rise, not because he loves to, but because he feels he should. He rises because he has been taught to do so. He rises—although he may not know it—because the very habits of the streets are saturated with Christian feeling and controlled

by Christian laws. The chivalry that leads him to vacate his seat in this case is not instinctive but acquired.

Now, when I preach my threatened sermon to good-looking people, I shall make my point very clear. I shall demonstrate to my elegant congregation—the novelists and poets being my witnesses—that their charms and graces render them singularly attractive, engaging, and lovable. As the poet says in *Festus*:

> The beautiful are never desolate;
> But some one alway loves them—God or man.

And lovable people are both very delightful and very dangerous. The world is governed by lovable people. Lovable people twist us round their little fingers and do as they like with us. In her fine monograph on Charles Lamb, Miss Flora Masson points out that there is, in our best hero-worship, not merely a profound admiration, reverence, and awe, but also a strong element of human tenderness. The people who can make us love them are our kings and queens, and, for weal or for woe, they rule us as they will. It follows, therefore, that any natural endowment that tends to make a man attractive to his fellows is an instrument of almost infinite possibilities. I shall be at no loss for a

text for my sermon. The Bible is full of stories about good-looking people. One has only to reach down a concordance and look up the word 'fair,' for example, to be impressed with the stress that the Scriptures lay upon the responsibilities of beauty. If I find my sermon going well, as preachers say, I shall tell the story of Absalom from history, and of Steerforth from fiction, to show that good-looking people can lead us to heaven or lure us to hell. I shall be fortunate if I do not send my beautiful hearers away wishing in their hearts that they had been made less fair.

But I must not, and will not, be misunderstood. Of the two kinds of chivalry that I have named, the chivalry that is acquired is obviously a finer thing than the chivalry that is instinctive. The one is the product of Nature; the other is a triumph of Grace. The attentions that we pay to unattractive people are, in the nature of the case, more meritorious than the attentions that we pay to good-looking people. Indeed, the attentions that we pay to good-looking people have no merit at all except so far as they would have been paid, under similar circumstances, if the good looks were not there. Charles Lamb's argument is not unlike the argument of the Sermon on the Mount. 'If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?' Instinctive virtues,

that is to say, are without moral value. It was the amazement of Paul that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. In George Keith's old hymn he asks:

> What was there in us that could merit esteem
> Or give the Creator delight?
> 'Twas even so, Father!' we ever must sing,
> 'Because it seemed good in Thy sight.'

It is clear, therefore, that the highest form of chivalry is not the chivalry that is elicited by the winsomeness or charm of the person served. In George Fox's Journal the Quaker tells a great story of the Ulverston riots of 1682. 'The man in the leathern breeches' had been preaching with his wonted plainness and fervour. The crowd set upon him and beat him with holly bushes and hedge stakes till he was insensible. On his recovering consciousness, a rough lout rushed at him and struck him so savage a blow on the arm that the limb fell useless to his side and he could not lift it. There were many who feared that he would never be able to use it again. 'But,' Fox says in his Journal, 'I looked at it in the love of God, for I was in the love of God to them that had persecuted me!' '*I looked at it in the love of God!*' says the Quaker, and it is wonderful how fair the most repulsive

faces may appear if only we can contrive to see them through that divine and wondrous medium. That is the highest form of chivalry, but there is certainly nothing instinctive about it.

VII

A NEST OF SINGING BIRDS

THE choir is not an invention; it is a creation. Let that be distinctly understood. The reason for its existence lies embedded in the eternal nature of things. God said, 'Let there be light!' And there was light. He had no need to say, 'Let there be song!' because *He* Was; and, since *He* Was, the morning stars sang together. *Whenever and wherever created things have stood face to face with their Creator, they have straightway burst into melody.* The instinct is as old as the world, as true as the Bible, and as strong as death. There is something strikingly beautiful and suggestive about the existence of the choir. Men may go to other houses, but they will not sing there. Or, if they sing, their melody will be accidental, fortuitous, arbitrary, individual; prompted, it may be, by the whim or caprice of the moment. But when men go to this house—to the House of the Lord—

they know beforehand that they will want to sing, and that they will *all* want to sing, and that they will all want to sing *their very best*; and therefore they set aside their most finished singers to lead them in their song, so that the great burst of harmony may rise with reverence as well as with rejoicing to the Throne invisible. Yes, the choir is a creation.

> God is its author, and not man: He laid
> The key-note of all harmonies; He planned
> All perfect combinations, and He made
> Us so that we could hear and understand.

And, as with all the rest of creation, God saw that it was very good. And we ministers have fallen in love with this part of creation as with other parts. Those sacred moments which preacher and singers spend together just before they enter the church are of incalculable worth. Even the business of arranging every detail of the coming service is of unspeakable value. I often think that it is like the felling of the trees in the forests of Lebanon, and the hewing of the stones in the quarries of Judea, preparatory to the building of the Temple. Everything that savoured of noise and dust and confusion was arranged away back, out of sight. 'And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither;

so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.' The tall columns, the heavy beams, the enormous stones, the massive buttresses all rose in awful silence.

> No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung;
> Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung.
> Majestic stillness!

It is very beautiful to have every tiniest detail perfectly arranged beforehand, out of sight of the worshippers, and for the minister and the choir to go to their places feeling that they perfectly understand one another, and will need no other signals or communications of any kind. And this delightful camaraderie is, in itself, of immense worth. A spirit of partnership, of sympathy, of oneness, is created which blends every part of the service into one perfect and harmonious whole; and which leads both minister and minstrels to feel that they are acting, not as separate units, but as helpers the one of the other. And when minister and singers bow together for one hushed and holy moment and afresh consecrate the powers they are about to employ to the divine service, and seek upon that service the divine blessing, each goes to his pulpit or his place feeling that he has been called to a task that angels might envy, and the triumph of the day

is already more than half won. Any minister who enjoys such delightful experiences knows how greatly they enrich his ministry.

But the choir is not by any means confined to the church. When I was a small boy I used occasionally to relieve the tedium of a specially lengthy sermon by reading the private paragraphs in the Prayer-book. And I was particularly perplexed, I remember, by the notification that '*In Quires and Places where they sing, here followeth the Anthem.*' The reference to '*quires*' was perfectly intelligible, but what were the other '*places where they sing*'? But I have found out since. I said just now that whenever and wherever created things have stood face to face with their Creator, they have straightway burst into melody. That is actually so, and I call Mr. Standish O'Grady to bear witness. He is writing in *The Irish Review* on 'An Irish Sunrise.' He watches it from the slope of the Wicklow mountains, looking eastward over the Irish Sea, beyond which, faintly outlined, the Welsh hills swim in mist. He says that, as he watched darkness give place to dawn, and dawn to day, it really seemed to him as though God was creating His world all over again. And he goes on to say that 'through those few hours of luminous shadow there was silence; and yet not silence; for the grouse were talking in the heather, and the

night-jar reeling, for ever reeling as he wheeled; a reed-warbler sang; and then, always, our little mountain streams kept tinkling, playing with liquid tender fingers upon their stony lyres. I distinguished the separate notes of three of them—the sweet innocents.' Then, as the grey streaks stole over the eastern hills, the lark soared into the sky, and the brave blackbird and the cheerful thrush lifted up their sweet, blithe voices. And, at last, 'so heralded, so welcomed by glad singings, pouring forth out of millions of innocent throats, the bird peoples of the earth, the silver-skirted fleeting dawn advanced, and soon the flaming cause of all that vanguard of music and beauty arose in his glory, pouring forth over all his creatures the boundless floods of his light and fire!' 'Let there be light!' God said on that first day, and, when the light flashed forth, the morning stars—the first of choirs—sang joyfully together. And, from that day down to this, whenever Jehovah has clothed Himself with light as with a garment and appeared robed in the splendours of the dawn, the birds of the air have seen to it that a choir to welcome Him was not wanting.

No reader of English history can have failed to notice how strikingly the principle I have tried to set down here is illustrated on those impressive pages. Whenever and wherever, I said, created

things have stood face to face with their Creator, they have straightway burst into melody. Now England has many times stood face to face with God, but twice especially. I am thinking, of course, of the Reformation and of the Methodist Revival of the eighteenth century. Those are the two greatest religious experiences that the nation has ever known. And the striking thing is that these two great religious revivals were followed by the two greatest bursts of song in the history of our English literature. The Reformation, so far as England is concerned, culminated in the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The great religious movement was complete, and the great poetic movement immediately began. England, to use John Richard Green's fine phrase, became 'a nest of singing birds.' The ships that took part in the great fight with the Armada had scarcely sheltered in their quiet havens when Edmund Spenser landed at Bristol from his Irish retreat and published *The Faerie Queen*. The great poem became at once 'the delight of every gentleman, the model of every poet, and the solace of every soldier.' While the nation was still in its ecstasies over the work of Spenser, the first-fruits of the genius of Shakespeare made their appearance. Shakespeare is instantly followed by Jonson, and Jonson by a host of others. England had known

nothing like it. The country became a choir. Within fifty years there arose fifty poets, many of the first order, and two centuries of silence was gloriously broken by an unprecedented outburst of song. It was exactly like the wakening of the grove to the sunrise. Through the night the gloomy trees were wrapped in sombre silence broken only by an occasional flutter when the wind sways the branches and disturbs a drowsy bird on his supple perch. But the sun rises, and the great avenue is choral with an almost ear-splitting burst of melody.

It is no mere coincidence that led to a precise repetition of the same set of circumstances at the close of the eighteenth century. John Wesley had made that century peculiarly his own. He had gone through the land again and again until he had set England ablaze with religious fervour from end to end. As Mr. Augustine Birrell says in his *Miscellanies*, 'John Wesley contested three kingdoms in the cause of Christ. He did it for the most part on horseback. He paid more turnpikes than any man who ever bestrode a beast. Eight thousand miles was his annual record for many a long year, during each of which he seldom preached less frequently than a thousand times. No man ever lived nearer the centre than John Wesley, neither Clive nor Pitt, neither Mansfield nor

Johnson. You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life's work for England.' Here again, then, you have a great and deep religious awakening. Here again England stands face to face with God. And I said that whenever and wherever created things have stood face to face with their Creator, they have straightway burst into melody. See what happened as a direct outcome of this movement that shook England. The nation became choral with song. Once more the country became a nest of singing birds. Even whilst Wesley was dying, Coleridge and Wordsworth and Southey and Lamb were brooding over the masterpieces that, a year or two later, delighted the nation. Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Moore, James Hogg and Lord Byron, George Crabbe and Percy Shelley, Thomas Campbell and Walter Savage Landor, Leigh Hunt and John Keats are all names that belong to that extraordinary period. It is no wonder that when, a few years after the death of Wesley, the poet-laureate died the Government of the day were embarrassed by the wealth of their riches and knew not whom to appoint. The fact is that the dawn had stolen over the hills, and all the birds awoke to greet it.

I have sometimes heard shallow critics comparing the work of the preacher with the work of the singer. Nothing could be more ridiculous. Each has his place in the firmament, and it is a great place. But you cannot compare them. 'There is one glory of the sun; and another glory of the moon; and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory.' The minister has a place all his own. It has pleased God to make him the world's evangelist. The New Testament ascribes to the preacher of the gospel a place unparalleled and supreme. He is an ambassador, a witness, a prophet, and a herald, all in one. He stands day and night between the living and the dead. His work is first, and there is no second. To institute a comparison is to introduce a confusion. But the singer also has his place. His ministry is a most gracious and sacred and beautiful one. Song has a power of its own. George Gissing tells, in *Born in Exile*, of the strange influence of sacred music on his sceptical hero. 'Notwithstanding his profound hatred and contempt, Godwin could never hear the union of many voices in song but his breast heaved and a choking warmth rose in his throat. Even where prejudice wrought most strongly with him, it had to give way before this rush of emotion. He entered the churchyard and found the leafy nook with a tombstone where he

had often rested. And as he listened to the rude chanting of verse after verse, tears fell upon his cheeks.' But, subtle and potent as this is, the appeal of the singer, unlike the appeal of the preacher, is not an original appeal. A song may reach the heart, and, to the preacher's great delight, it often does. But the song only reaches the heart because the work of the sermon has been done so well. The song revives old associations, sacred memories, and holy impressions, and brings back, with a rush of emotion, the most precious thoughts of earlier years. The song needs that background, and is ineffective without it. It would have been useless for Paul to have stood up on Mars Hill and sung a solo. It would be ridiculous for a missionary to rely upon the singing of hymns among the palm-groves of the South Sea Islands or amidst the crowds of inland China. The moving magic of sacred song can only be effective if the work of the preacher has already been done. Song is like sunshine. But the sunshine will never woo the golden harvest from the stubborn soil unless the sower has first scattered the precious seed.

But, as against this, the singer has his compensations. If the work of the preacher is basic, fundamental, paramount, supreme, it is also true that the song of the minstrel haunts the memory longest. I have shown that a great religious awakening is always accompanied by a glorious burst of song.

And the song always lingers. When Luther was journeying towards the Diet of Worms, at which he made his epoch-making stand for truth and righteousness, he suddenly caught sight of the bell-towers of the city in the distance. He rose like one inspired and chanted the great song whose words and music he had composed two days before :

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing ;
Our Helper He, amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work his woe ;
His craft and power are great,
And armed with cruel hate—
On earth is not his equal.

Nobody nowadays reads Luther's writings, but we all sing Luther's hymn. It was the most natural thing in the world that Charles Wesley and his songs should arise side by side with John Wesley and his sermons. Yet none but Methodist students read John Wesley's sermons nowadays—and even they do not read them from choice—but we all sing Charles Wesley's hymns. Moody's sermons are forgotten ; but Sankey's hymns are all over the world. The sower does his work and leaves the field ; but the sunshine plays with the growing crop till harvest-time. The song lingers ; let that be

the joy of the singer. And let all preachers and all singers clasp hands in happiest fellowship, and hold each other in deathless affection, till their voices blend in the perfect minstrelsy of the choir invisible.

VIII

THE AEROPLANE

THE airship has arrived. There can be no doubt about that. The world has dreamed for centuries of its coming; but it is actually here at last! Man, so long a trier, is now a flier; and he scarcely knows what to make of himself in his new capacity. I know a dear old soul here in Tasmania who, in an up-country prayer-meeting the other day, offered this curious but affecting supplication. 'O Lord,' he prayed, 'when we were young we broke most of Thy laws, but we always had respect unto the law of gravitation! But now, O Lord, men are even defying that one! Lord, have mercy upon them!' This struck me as being very interesting. The only trouble is that I am not at all sure about the dear old gentleman's premises. He assumes that the aspiration to soar is a modern one; he assumes that it is a worldly one; and he assumes

that it is an outrage upon the law of gravitation. I am afraid that these assumptions will not bear examination. First of all, the tendency is not modern. It is nearly three hundred years since men first began to fly. In the second place, the attempts were made within, and not without, the Church. A missionary—Francesco Lana—was the pioneer. He felt, heroic soul that he was, that the Church could laugh in triumph at the most stormy oceans and at the most forbidding mountain ranges if only he could secure for her ambassadors a pathway through the clouds. It is wonderful how often the Church has been the pathfinder in the progress of the world. A recent traveller among the Alps tells of a terrible snowstorm. The little village in which he found himself was literally buried. Every road was blocked, and trade was paralysed. But the villagers said to each other, 'Wait until the people go to church on Sunday!' And Sunday came. The church bells rang as usual. Little companies of men and women from mountain and valley emerged from their buried homes, and fought their way bravely along the hidden tracks. And by Monday morning the snow was trodden down, and business was resumed. This is surely an allegory. The Church is the pathfinder of civilization. Commerce, education, and philanthropy follow only where she goes. And the airship is no

exception to the rule. It was with a view to winging the gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth that the first airman looked wistfully skywards. And, in the third place, my poor old friend is no more happy in his assumption that the airship hurls defiance at the law of gravitation. Mr. Mervyn O'Gorman, a veteran flier, warmly repudiates the suggestion. The law of gravitation, he says, has no terrors for the airman. Just as a flat piece of slate or iron will glide horizontally along the surface of a pond, showing no tendency to sink, so long as its propelling force holds out, so Mr. O'Gorman assures us, an aeroplane stands in no danger of falling so long as it can be driven forwards. It will not go *down* as long as it can go *on*. There is always safety in progression. An airman no more defies the law of gravitation than does the albatross. All new modes of transit have their initial perils. The mortality caused through shipwreck a few centuries ago was simply frightful. In those days pious souls regarded seafarers just as my good friend in the prayer-meeting now regards airfarers. But it is all right. He need not worry. Aeronauts assure us that, when once the initial difficulties of their craft have been successfully overcome, the air will present itself to the popular mind as the most natural and obvious route for safe and pleasant transit. They point out that a ship on the sea,

and a motor-car on the land, are essentially very dangerous affairs. And for this reason : Each ship is compelled by the nature of things to travel on precisely the same plane as every other ship. Each motor-car must rush along on exactly the same level as every other car. Collisions are inevitable ! But the graceful vessels that will shortly negotiate the magnificent spaces overhead will be cramped by no such humiliating necessities. They will have infinite ranges of altitude to manipulate at their discretion.

It is a singular thing that, at almost exactly the same time as my old friend was offering his quaint petition here in Tasmania, a most significant thing was happening in London. Archdeacon Holmes, as Canon in Residence at St. Paul's Cathedral, was paying the first tribute ever offered from that historic metropolitan pulpit to aviators who had met their deaths in the pursuit of their calling.

Now here is a most interesting point. Here is a striking contrast. Here are two radically different ways of looking at the selfsame thing ! Here is my poor old friend in the prayer-meeting. He evidently regards the fallen airmen as foolhardy and wicked adventurers who, having defied the divine law of gravitation, have been overtaken by the just and natural retribution which their impious temerity so richly deserved. And here, on the

other hand, is the preacher at St. Paul's lauding the unhappy victims as heroic pioneers who have laid down their lives in a great and noble cause. The whole world, and the whole Church, will have to make up its mind as to whether it will go to that up-country prayer-meeting or to that service in the city. Shall we say Amen to the old man's prayer, or shall we murmur our endorsement of the Archdeacon's tribute? The prayer-meeting view held the field for a very long time; but I fancy that, as the practical and economical possibilities involved in the new science have become increasingly manifest, the public mind has passed through the tortures of transition, and has inclined to the more charitable construction. The cathedral view is coming to its own.

Now, as a matter of fact, we are all airmen, and we are working at our craft on a truly magnificent scale. I only realized this the other evening, and it came upon me with all the force of a sensational discovery. It was a warm starlit evening. I found myself alone on a grassy hill-top. It was one of those delightful hours that seem made for reveries and rhapsodies; and I yielded to the subtle temptation to lie for awhile among the grassy tufts. I lay with my back to the earth and my face to the sky. I could see nothing but worlds swimming in nothingness. Not so much as a wisp

of spear-grass intervened between my eyes and the far-off stars of God. I revelled for one delicious moment in the intoxicating sense of bewildering immensity. The earth seemed a ridiculously microscopic affair. I laughed at its puny little proportions. Here was I navigating a universe of space! Millions of miles lay out in every direction! Above me, about me, before me, behind me, nothing but nothingness! I was skimming through it at a pace compared with which a cannon-ball is positively sluggish! It was exhilarating, that glorious sensation of sailing on through the infinite! And what is this tiny globe on which I am sprawling, and, riding upon which, I am flying through incomprehensible spaces at a pace of which no aviator ever dreamed? And then it came upon me like a flash. Why, to be sure, the very earth is an airship, a perfectly poised and perfectly balanced airship, swimming on and on and on and on and on through distances and at a speed that stagger the imagination. How silly we mortals are! I was at a cinematographic entertainment the other evening. A street scene appeared on the sheet. At once everybody was full of admiration and exclamation: 'Oh, look at that little boy! Look at the lady with the sunshade! Isn't it real? Isn't it lifelike?' And yet it was a very stilted flickery kind of affair compared with the real thing. And next day I saw

the real thing. Here was the actual street, sunlit and busy! Here are crowds of little fellows, some laughing, some crying! And here are lots of charming ladies with most lovely sunshades! But I hear no shouts of acclamation and admiration! The genuine thing is commonplace; it is only the eye-tormenting flicker of reproduction in the stuffy and darkened hall that can gain the vociferous applause of the crowd. It is a mad world, truly! We go into ecstasies over the scene in the cinema; the scene as God paints it only makes us yawn! We exhaust all our superlative adjectives in our praise of an artificial flower; the flower that no human fingers could fashion we crush beneath our feet! We gasp in spell-bound admiration at a crazy and ungainly aeroplane that whirrs and wobbles, and at length consents to rise. We think very cavalierly of the magnificent airship on which for years, sleeping and waking, we have navigated the infinite spaces at a perfectly breathless speed!

I like the airman. He proves to me that, at the beginning, man heard God say, 'Have dominion!' And ever since that early and divine coronation man has felt himself a king. If there is a mountain, he must climb it! If there is a desert, he must cross it! If there is an ocean, he must sail it! If there is an element, he must conquer it! It is true that he has lost much of his primitive authority, but

that only taunts him and eggs him on. He is wretched when he is not reigning. He is content only when he conquers!

Yes, I like the airman. He is following a sure instinct. Man was made to soar. His face is to the skies. He must rise. He loves the height wherever he finds it. He will never be happy till the clouds are the dust of his feet. And I like, too, the way that the airman goes to work. He digs into the earth for iron, and he hews down heavy timber from the forest. He mounts by means of things that themselves tend to fall. Just as he builds his stately ships of steel that in itself will sink, so he builds his airships of things that in themselves will drop. That is the glory of man's greatest conquests. He takes the very things that tend to degrade him, and drag him down, and destroy him; and by means of them he soars gloriously skywards. Perhaps it is for such triumphs that God has left such heavy things lying about His world. I am sure that that is why He has left sickness, and pain, and sorrow, and death and temptation, and a lot of other heavy things lying about. 'We rise,' the poet says, 'by the things that are under our feet.' Of course we do. And when next we are inclined to murmur because there are so many of these heavy things that clog our spirits and bind us to earth, let us laugh at our

folly. The sailor builds his finest ship of heaviest steel, and the airman soars by means of things that fall. Depend upon it, heart of mine, the heaviness that seems to crush thee was meant for thee to soar by! Be an airman, every time!

IX

ROSES

I FELT that I should like to grow roses. So I bought a book. It is called *A Book About Roses*, and is written by Dean Hole. The very first sentence in the book is well worth the money I gave for it. And, ever since I opened the volume for the first time, that golden sentence has been singing itself over and over in my brain. Here it is: '*He who would have beautiful roses in his garden must have beautiful roses in his heart.*'

'Roses in *his heart*!'

'*Roses* in his heart!'

A heart full of delicate fragrance and full of many-tinted loveliness, a heart littered only with silky petals and haunted only by exquisite perfumes! 'He who would have beautiful roses in his garden must have beautiful roses in his heart!' I want beautiful roses in my garden. And to get them I must grow beautiful roses *in my heart*! But how

am I to achieve this floriculture of the soul? Who will teach me how to turn the wilderness of my heart into a garden of sweetly scented roses?

I turned wistfully back to my book, and I find that if I would grow beautiful roses in my garden and beautiful roses in my heart, I must cultivate *an eye for roses.* I must learn intelligently to admire them. I must know a really lovely blossom when I see it. I must have too much artistic appreciation to be tricked by garish gaudiness or deceived by vulgar display. I must not mistake the flaunting for the fair. But then, how am I to acquire this highly educated taste, this nicely cultured eye? How am I to learn to love a really choice blossom, and to scorn a merely showy bloom? How shall I learn to distinguish a dainty princess from a shameless pretender? There is only one thing for it. I must go where good roses are! I must secure the friendship of people who think roses, talk roses, read roses, write roses, dream roses, and who do all this because they *love* roses! I must attend the great rose shows, where only the very choicest varieties are exhibited. I must visit the most successful rosariums, where the most exquisite kinds are fondly treasured by hearts in which roses are flourishing, and where every bush is tended by fingers so soft and tender that not a dew-drop is needlessly disturbed. Yes, I must go where good roses are if

I would learn to know a good rose when I see it. I must go where good roses are if I would grow good roses in my garden, and grow good roses in my heart. Now I know people whose hearts are perfect gardens of roses. You cannot spend ten minutes in their company without detecting the subtle and delicious aroma. Their very presence is like perfume. Their influence is fragrant. I meet them sometimes at the communion table. The prayer-meeting is their favourite haunt. The consecration-meeting is very dear to some of them. Their hearts are full of roses. They are the masters of the art that I so earnestly covet. If I would learn to recognize the flowers that are best worth cultivating, and to instantly detect those less worthy blossoms that are scarcely worth my pains, I must cherish the friendship of these happy people. And One there is whose heart was so full of roses that He was Himself called 'The Rose'; I must be much with *Him*. He will teach me the wonderful secret.

Not by any means that an educated eye is all that I need. A mere faculty for critical discrimination between an excellent rose and an inferior blossom will never bring roses into my poor, weedy heart. Roses must be not only recognized, and appreciated, and admired—they must be *loved*. If ever I am to grow beautiful roses, either in my

garden or in my heart, I must fall helplessly in love with the blushing blossoms. 'He who would have beautiful roses in his garden,' says the opening sentence of my book, 'must have beautiful roses in his heart. He must love them well and always. To win, he must woo, as Jacob wooed Laban's daughter, though drought and frost consume. He must have not only the glowing admiration, the enthusiasm, and the passion, but the tenderness, the thoughtfulness, the reverence, the watchfulness of love.'

I can see now why I have never found roses in my heart. I have been too gushing in my admiration, and not sufficiently persevering in my cultivation. I have been a fickle and capricious lover. I have lacked steadfastness, and determination, and fidelity.

Dean Hole tells of great lords and ladies who have been overwhelmed by the beauty of the blossoms at the show. 'Oh, dear,' cries her ladyship in ecstasies, 'Sir Thomas and I are positively going to ruin ourselves with a new rosarium!' They ask where these wonderful blossoms were grown. The roses came, in all probability, from some labourer's modest garden. His lordship buys some cuttings at once, and hands them over to his gardener But they come to nothing!

'I say!' exclaims his lordship later on, 'those

rose-trees turned out a regular *do*. Cost a hatful of money—nearly *a tenner*—and, by Jove, sir, our curate at the county flower-show came and licked them all into fits!'

'Sir,' the Dean replied, 'I never in my life recommended a person of your profound ignorance to have anything to do with roses! He who would have beautiful roses *in his garden* must have beautiful roses *in his heart*!'

Now it will not do for me to hurry home from the communion service or the prayer-meeting as his lordship hurried home from the show. Am I in earnest? Do I really and truly love, with all my heart and soul, the beauteous blossoms that I see flourishing in other lives? I need something more than his lordship's fickle fancy, a mere willingness to grow them that others may admire them. Do I love the roses for their own sweet sakes? Do I feel for these blossoms of the soul not only a glowing admiration, enthusiasm, and passion, but the tenderness, the thoughtfulness, the reverence, and the watchfulness of a constant lover's love for his beloved? Am I ready to love them thus, and to love them until they are all, and always, my very, very own? How shall I answer such questions as these?

There is, of course, but one true test. Roses are grown by sacrifice, and the difference between his

lordship and the labourer who produced the prize blossoms was simply this: the labourer loved the roses with all a lover's ardour, and counted no sacrifice too great to make for them. His lordship never really loved them at all. He simply loved himself, and the prizes he might win, and the praises he might receive, and he could not dream of sacrifice for the roses' own sakes. But, depend upon it, it is by sacrifice that roses grow. Dean Hole tells a great story of a workman's show at Nottingham He expected very little, for it was out of season, and it was only a workman's show, anyway. But he met with the surprise of his life. 'I have never seen better specimens of cut roses, grown under glass, than those which were exhibited by these working men!' He remained in the district, visited the cottages, and inquired as to how the wonderful blooms were produced. And it was the same story everywhere. Oh, the sacrifices that had been made for those roses! 'How do you afford,' he asked one factory operative, 'to buy these new and expensive varieties?' 'Just by keeping away from the beer-shops,' the man answered.

Another walked, before it was light in the morning, two miles to tend his precious rose-trees, and then snatched a hasty breakfast and rushed off to the factory. Another tumbled out on bitter frosty nights, and stripped the blankets off his bed to wrap

around his favourite trees. Dean Hole left Nottingham feeling that he had been among the bravest knights of floral chivalry. He carried away in his hand a glorious bouquet of roses with the workmen's 'best respects to the missus.' And in his heart he bore away a sincere affection for the heroes he was leaving. If I can only humble myself, and sit thoughtfully for awhile at the feet of these happy English toilers, I am sure that I shall yet be able to grow roses in my heart.

The Rev. D. M. Ross, of Glasgow, tells a lovely story of Henry Drummond. A woman whose husband was dying came to Drummond late on a Saturday evening, and begged him to come to her house.

'My husband is deein', sir; he's no able to speak to you, and he's no able to hear you; but oh, *do* come!'

'But if your husband can neither hear nor speak, it's of no use my coming,' the professor reasoned.

'Oh, yes, sir, do come,' the woman pleaded. 'I'd gie anything for him to hae just *a breath o' you* aboot him afore he dees!'

She knew that Henry Drummond grew roses in his heart.

PART II

I

WEDGE BAY

THERE is just one spot on God's fair earth that I fancy I know better than any one else. I am not claiming the Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society on that account, although I cannot imagine that any of the world's more ponderous explorers can have done their work with greater thoroughness. Lord Curzon told the Royal Geographical Society the other day that the explorers of the future, instead of examining the general outline of huge territories, will do their best work by investigating small areas in microscopic detail. That being so, I am not without hope of official recognition ; but I will not at this moment press my claims. The realm of my choice is worth exploring. It is a little land-locked bay. I do not suppose that the entire sheet of shimmering water exceeds in area a couple of square miles. Its banks are studded by

scores of sheltered nooks and dainty coves—the homes of the iris, the orchid and the heath—and away over the rolling hills the great bush clothes the rugged slopes as far as eye can reach. I have spent about six months of my life poking about this solitary place trying to woo its favour and win its golden secrets, and I really think that, if one of the trees about the water's edge were to fall in my absence, I should miss it and mourn it next time I go. I have no idea how many trees there are, but I should be like those African shepherds who, knowing nothing of arithmetic and unable to count, nevertheless miss at once the sheep that has vanished from their flock. There is something strangely individual, and therefore strangely familiar, about trees. In his *Gamekeeper at Home*, Richard Jefferies speaks of the grief with which he gazed upon the ugly gap in the English avenue caused by the fall of the old oak; and the paragraph comes back to me as I glance round upon the giant trees that tower up from the scrub around the waters of Wedge Bay. Some of them are getting very tottery, and the sight of one of them, stretched at full length among its smaller neighbours who have been crushed beneath its fall, would awaken much the same emotions as those with which a visitor to his former home reads the names of his old familiars on the tombstones in the village churchyard. Fortunately,

however, such calamities occur much less frequently than one would suppose, and the thing that most surprises you is that the changes are so few. I rowed one day recently into a shady little inlet, and was surprised to find it exactly as I had left it a couple of years before. The stone fireplace I had fashioned, and the traces of the picnic we had held there, were quite undisturbed. So far as I could discern, not a stick nor a stone had been moved since our previous visit, and the bush was to all appearances exactly as we left it. Out in the world of men things change so swiftly that one's brain reels and swims with the ceaseless whirl, and it exerts a steadying influence on one's mind to retreat into a solitude that simply scorns all your lightning transformations. Here, as it was in the beginning, it is now, and so it ever shall be, world without end; and it is restful to saturate oneself in the brooding silence of the forest primaeval. I like to sit in this quiet cove, where I picnicked two years ago, and to reflect that it is to-day exactly as it was in the days of the Caesars. It is like closing your tired eyes when, at the cinematograph, you can bear the flicker no longer.

It is quite possible that my claim to know Wedge Bay better than any other mortal will be challenged. But it will not be challenged by a resident. I have often felt, when I have been discussing some crescent

beach or flowering glen with an inhabitant of the place, that the people who live hereabout have never awakened to the charms of the beauty-spots around them. They are not to be judged too severely on that account. They remind me of the people of Mablethorpe, Tennyson's favourite retreat. 'Mablethorpe,' as Francis Thompson tells us, 'was the bourne to which his feet turned whenever there was a question of a holiday, and it became so idealized in his mind that for ever after it was a standard of grandeur by which he tried all seas.' But the inhabitants of the place were always puzzled to discover what it was that fascinated him. 'I used to stand on the sand-built ridge and think it was the spine-bone of the world,' Tennyson exclaims. But the old fisherman on the beach could make neither head nor tail of it. He could not imagine why the crowds swarmed down to his quiet home as soon as summer came. 'Nottingham and Lincoln foalk moastly coom 'ere,' the old man told the poet, 'a vast sight of 'em soom taime; and the wind blaws the poor things a bit, and they weshes their bodies in the waaves!' That is the worst of living in a place. I confess that I saw more of London, and formed a more just appreciation of its grandeurs, during a brief visit to the Homeland from New Zealand than during all the years of my residence in the world's metropolis.

There is a famous story told concerning James Russell Lowell. In the days of his youth he spent one memorable summer vacation in the White Mountain district. One day, when enjoying a stroll through the Franconia Notch, he became absorbed in conversation with a man who was in charge of a sawmill. The man chatted on, feeding his mill with logs the while. Presently the poet asked his new acquaintance if he could direct him to a point from which he could obtain a good view of the 'Old Man of the Mountain.' '*Dunno*,' replied the man, '*never seed it!*' Lowell immediately expressed his astonishment that any one living so near such a marvellous spectacle, which people came from long distances to see, should never have taken the pains to gaze upon it. 'And how far have you come?' asked the man. With evident pride the poet answered that he had come from Boston. 'D'you tell?' exclaimed the countryman. 'I'd like to see Boston. Why, just to stand for once on Bunker Hill! You've been there often, likely?' And James Russell Lowell confessed with shame and confusion of face that *he never had*!

Wedge Bay is the most humiliating place in the solar system. If any scholar is proud of his knowledge of botany or zoology, or entomology, or ornithology, or any other -osophy or -ology, let him do as I have done; let him take with

him a couple of inquisitive schoolgirls and go to Wedge Bay! He will find himself in a world that is simply overflowing with life. He will be bewildered by its teeming abundance, its confusing multiplicity, its endless prodigality. He will find life, in every possible and impossible phase and form, swarming and scurrying, flapping and fluttering, rustling and crawling, whispering and twittering, bounding and splashing, everywhere and all the time! He will see life peeping forth from every crack and crevice. Life is breaking out, and bursting up, and bubbling over everywhere. Kick a stone, or crush a shell, or stir a log or tear the bark, and new forms of life will unfailingly present themselves. I have heard of men going to the city *to see life.* Deluded creatures! If they really want to see life, let them go to Wedge Bay! Here they will find life that is terrible, and life that is beautiful; life that is repulsive, and life that is charming; with all varieties and gradations of intermediate shades. Let your scholar go, I say, and test his erudition in this quiet spot. And let those curious schoolgirls probe into every place that protrudes and poke into every hole that yawns. And as they bring forth every moment, wriggling and kicking, some new and fantastic form of life, let them ask him, time after time, 'What is it, father, what is it?' And he will soon grow tired of the exacting

exercise of finding safe and general terms with which to classify the new discovery; or, abandoning casuistry, he will weary of the monotony of his own voice as he confesses, again and again, his lamentable ignorance. And, in either case, his pride will vanish like a dream, and he will return from Wedge Bay a humble and a contrite man.

Nor does the trouble end at that. The humiliations of Wedge Bay do not spare me even at this excruciating point. For, after all that I have seen, I am still oppressed by the painful conviction that most of the beauty of this charming place has really eluded me, and even eluded these sharp-eyed young foragers of mine. At every turn I am conscious of a feeling that there is a beauty lurking everywhere that I am too gross and too blind and too stupid to perceive. And this painful sensation was intensified rather than relieved by a striking thing that I read in a book with which I invaded these leafy bowers. It struck me as a gem in its way. It occurs in the *Life of Frank Buckland*. The genial naturalist resolved to make a special study of snakes. So he engaged a professional viper-catcher, named White, to collect some for him. White went off to the New Forest, and in four days returned saying that he had had some capital sport. 'We went into an empty room,' Buckland tells us, 'and, standing on a chair, I unloosed the top of White's

bag, and shot the contents on to the floor. The slippery reptiles came tumbling out, first singly and then in pairs, and at last the main body, coiled and twisted together into a solid mass, like Medusa's chignon ; and in half a minute I had them all over the floor looking as savage as vipers can look.' Buckland and White then caught one of the biggest, held it securely, and lifted it from the ground. 'The viper slashed his tail about, like a loose halyard in a gale of wind, and then twined his body round White's hand. I tickled his nose with a feather until he was thoroughly furious. I then got a glass slide out of the microscope and placed it in the serpent's mouth. In an instant both fangs struck down upon it. Upon taking away the glass from its jaws, I was delighted to observe two drops of perfectly clear translucent fluid resting upon it, each drop corresponding to the place where the tooth had struck. I at once placed these drops under the microscope and then saw a wondrous sight. After a second or two, on a sudden, a crystal-like fibre shot across the field of vision, and then another and another, these slender lines crossing each other at various angles, reminding me of the general appearance of an aurora borealis, or of delicate frost crystals on a window when there has been a sharp touch of frost.' Now, if all the coruscations of the aurora are hidden in the venom

of the viper, how much loveliness I must be missing as I stroll along this lonely shore, thrid the winding tracks of this solitary bush, or peer with shaded eyes from the side of the boat down into the crystalline depths of this clear, clear water!

Yes, one feels himself something of an adventurer when he has spent six months of his life at Wedge Bay. In his *First Men in the Moon*, Mr. H. G. Wells describes the fierce joy of his heroes when they made the most sensational of all their discoveries. They were moving about a world that they supposed to be dead, and its dreary deadness depressed them. Then came the sensation! One of them came suddenly upon a germ of vegetable life!

'"Cavor!" he whispered.

'"What?" his companion replied.

'"Look!"

'They stared incredulous. They could not believe their eyes. They gave inarticulate cries. They gripped each other's arms.

'"It is life!" said the one.

'"It is life!" echoed the other.'

Life! *Life!* LIFE!!!

It was like standing by and actually watching a miracle performed; and surely the wonder is not the less because at Wedge Bay I see that selfsame miracle a million times repeated!

But even Wedge Bay is not Paradise, as I learned

from another discovery that I made there, a discovery as startling to me as Robinson Crusoe's discovery of the foot-print. I shall never forget it. I was sitting on the beach one still and sunny morning, with a newly found and very beautiful shell in my hand, when I was awakened from my reverie by a patter of footsteps on the soft wet sand.

'If you please, sir, my sister is dead, and we wondered if you would bury her.'

Death—and at Wedge Bay! It was as startling as the discovery of life on a dead moon. I had never thought of death in connexion with Wedge Bay! It seemed as much out of place as a snow-flake at the Equator. But next day I saw boats from all parts of the bay converging upon a spot on the opposite shore, and I myself was rowed across. And then I saw the fathers of the tiny settlement bear a small oaken coffin on their shoulders and set off into the bush. It was a glorious day at midsummer, the skies were richest sapphire, and the bay was at its best. But the sun looked down upon a coffin; and behind the coffin the youth of the countryside—the girls in white blouses—followed with rustic solemnity. There was not so much as a track, and I have since attempted in vain to rediscover that lonely God's acre in the wild and tangled bush. But my eyes had been opened. And, once opened, they saw death everywhere.

Wedge Bay looked like some gory battle-field, littered with the dying and strewn with the dead. There was war in the waters, and fish preyed upon fish. There was war on the beach and war in the bush. The very trees were fighting and slaying. As Robert Louis Stevenson says :

> There the green murderer throve and spread,
> Upon his smothering victims fed,
> And wantoned on his climbing coil.
> Contending roots fought for the soil.
> Like frightened demons, with despair,
> Competing branches pushed for air.
> Green conquerors from overhead
> Bestrode the bodies of their dead !
> And in the groins of branches, lo !
> The cancers of the orchid grow !
> So hushed the woodland warfare goes
> Unceasing, and the silent foes
> Grapple and smother, strain and clasp,
> Without a cry, without a gasp.

And so my eyes were opened to the grim reality, and I was disillusioned ! Even Wedge Bay is not Paradise ! And often since, I have sat amidst the white and purple heath upon the bank that looks out on the bay, and I have wondered what it will all be like when every bloodstain has been removed, when the ugly trail of the serpent no longer marks the dusty track, and when not a single thing that defileth can by any means creep in.

II

THE MODESTY OF THE BUSH

On Sunday evening, after tea, I picked up a book and sauntered off into the bush. We were staying at Wedge Bay. The day had been sultry and oppressive, but the evening was deliciously cool. The myriad leafy banners that fluttered on the branches about me seemed to be enjoying the breeze as much as I was. I could understand what the prophet meant when he said that the trees of the field shall clap their hands. How still everything was, in spite of this subdued applause; and how very beautiful! And then, suddenly, the avenue of forestry and the carpet of wild flowers came to an abrupt end, and I was facing the sea. The tide was far out, and the sun was setting over the water. It was one of those fiery sunsets that no painter would attempt; its portrayal would seem like a wild exaggeration, an artistic blasphemy. The

clouds were ablaze with a barbaric profusion of colour, and the wet sands reflected almost weirdly their lurid and glowing hues. The golden shore was flecked with purple foam. The whole outlook —sea and sky and sand—was tinted as no artist on earth could paint it. I sat down on the fringe of the bush and abandoned myself to the glory that greeted me. A large iguana under the fern watched me with a furtive eye. I thought of my people, assembled at that very moment, in the church in the city. And then I thought of those who tell us that they do not need a church in order to worship. They go out beneath the blue dome of heaven. They stroll by the shore or row on the river. They wander along the leafy track that winds among the wattle and the gum, the myrtle and the musk. They find God in Nature. Seated here, on this glorious Sunday evening, there certainly seems to be something in what they say. I was half inclined to believe it.

But this will not do. And as I sat and listened more carefully to the whisper in the myrtles and the murmur of the sea, I heard Nature herself telling me that it will not do. It must, of course, be frankly recognized that Nature is very, very beautiful. How, sitting here, can I deny it? Wordsworth has interpreted the witchery of the woods in verses that are next door to inspiration. We all owe

more than we can tell to the quiet fields and the silent forest. Dr. Stalker has shown us that the boyhood of Jesus was largely affected by the idyllic scenery upon which He gazed day after day. But when you have said all this, you have said as much as Nature herself will allow you to say. For the thing that most profoundly impressed me in the course of that Sunday evening stroll was not so much the superb *majesty* as the exquisite *modesty* of Nature. I said that I picked up a book before setting out. It was a magnificent classic that, for its delineation and interpretation of Nature, has never been rivalled in our own or in any other literature. Carlyle simply revelled in it. I refer, of course, to the Book of Job. Now Job lived in a land where Nature ran riot, and knew no restraint. George Gilfillan finely says that 'the geography of the land of Job is the best commentary on its poetry. Conceive a land lorded over by the sun, when lightning, rushing in like an angry painter, did not dash his wild colours across the landscape; a land ever in extremes—now dried up as in a furnace, now swimming with loud waters—its sky the brightest or the blackest of heavens—desolate crags rising above rank vegetation—beauty adorning the brow of barrenness—shaggy and thunder-split hills surrounding narrow valley and water-courses; a land for a great part bare in the wrath

of Nature, when not swaddled in sudden tempest and whirlwind ; a land of lions, and wild goats, and wild asses, and ostriches, and hawks stretching toward the south, and horses clothed with thunder, and eagles making their nest on high ; a land through whose transparent air night looked down in all her queen-like majesty, all her lustrous ornaments on—the south blazing through all its chambers as with solid gold—the north glorious with Arcturus and his sons—the zenith crowning the heavens with a diadem of white, and blue, and purple stars.' Here, where Nature splashed on her spreading canvas with only the liveliest hues, lived Job ; and Job weaves all the wonder of it into his glowing and dramatic pages. ' The whole Book of Job,' as Ruskin says in his *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, ' the whole Book of Job appears to have been chiefly written and placed in the inspired volume in order to show the value of natural history and its power on the human heart. I cannot pass by it without pointing out the evidences of the beauty of the country that Job inhabited.' And, after having elaborated those natural glories, much in the temper of Gilfillan, whom I have already quoted, he concludes : ' The magnificent allusions to natural scenery throughout the book are calculated to touch the heart to the end of time.'

Now I have somewhat laboured this point, not to prove the magnificence of Nature, but to demonstrate her modesty. For, sitting here in the sunset, this is what I read. 'But where shall wisdom be found?' Job asks, as he looks around him upon this panorama of splendour. 'Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?' And with one voice Nature denies that wisdom is with her. 'The depth of the mine saith: *It is not in me!* And the depth of the sea saith: *It is not in me!* It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. But God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, *that* is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.' Sitting amidst so much loveliness, it would seem an ungracious task to have to show the limitations and deficiencies of this delightful world by which I am everywhere encompassed; but it is distinctly pleasing to be able to celebrate the charming modesty of that fair realm. The moment you ascribe to the bush or the beach excellencies that they do not pretend to possess they cry aloud, '*It is not in me! It is not in me!*' When I fall down to worship the spirit of the woods, he says, like the angel in Revelation: '*See thou do it not; worship God!*'

And quite obviously there are things for which all

my soul is aching, but which neither bush nor beach can give me. Ian Maclaren's friend affirmed that he got more good to his soul out of one splendid sunset than out of all the sermons he had ever heard. Now was there no word of Christ in all those sermons? That is the point. If I needed to hear only of the loveliness and wisdom and grandeur of God, then Nature would suffice. But I need a Saviour; and when I speak to her of my sin Nature makes sport of me. Miss Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler has most gracefully enshrined this thought in her *Legend of Sir Leonard*. Sir Leonard had sought everywhere for the face of Christ, but in vain. He tried the crowded city, but the Vision was not there. Then he turned to the open fields:

So he travelled long and late when he left the palace gate,
Till he reached a little well
In the shadow of a mountain, and beside the bubbling fountain
Brave Sir Leonard built a cell.
In that solitary glen, undefiled by feet of men,
He abode for many a day;
And he watched the grasses grow, and he learnt at last to know
What the birds and breezes say.
There he tarried many a year; then he said: No longer here
Must I watch and pray and wait.
I have listened to the thunder as it tore the clouds asunder,
And rolled up to heaven's gate;
I have seen the fir-tree's fork form a dwelling for the stork
Where no human foot has trod;
I have learnt the conies' lore, I have heard the lions roar
As they seek their meat from God.

I have loved the earth that gives food to everything that lives,
And man's hunger is sufficed;
But no glimpses have I caught of the Glory that I sought,
And the Vision of the Christ!

That is the one weak link in the argument, and when that weak link snaps the whole thing collapses. The human heart cries out for a personal Redeemer, and Nature cannot satisfy it. No man was ever yet heard to sing:

I heard the voice of Nature say,
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.'
I came to Nature as I was—
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in her a resting-place,
And she has made me glad.

I took some time just now with a classical and impressive illustration from sacred literature. Let me now lay beside it a particularly conclusive and intensely affecting story from the life of our own time. If ever a man loved and understood Nature in all her moods and phases, that man was Richard Jefferies. He was quite easily the greatest of all our naturalists. Indeed, he became a kind of Nature-mystic, and heard voices in the woods which less sensitive ears would never have caught. Nobody ever doted on the witchery of wild life as

he did. His books, now, happily, published in cheap and popular editions, have led us all to fall in love with the idyllic life of the countryside. He himself loved the rabbits and the pheasants so much that, even when he went out to shoot them, he had not the heart to pull the trigger. I suppose that there was scarcely a secret of wild life that he did not unravel. And yet, as Mr. Edward Thomas tells in his *Life,* Jefferies was a freethinker. He hated the churches, and regarded every steeple as a disfigurement of the landscape. He said that he loved to look upon the ocean because there were no spires there. Jefferies died young, as everybody knows. And as he lay dying, not yet forty years of age, he discovered that he must get behind and beyond the life of the fields in order to get to the real heart of things. During the last three months the Bible was his constant companion. 'Three weeks before his death Mrs. Jefferies was reading to him from Luke's Gospel. Jefferies said, "Those are the words of Jesus ; they are true, and all philosophy is hollow." Later still he said, "I have done wrong, and thought wrong ; it was my intellectual vanity." Mrs. Jefferies told Mr. J. W. North that they spent much time in prayer together and in reading St Luke. Almost his last intelligible words were, "Yes, yes ; that is so ; help, Lord, for Jesus' sake." Lying sleepless in the night, the simple old faith

came back to him, and he died listening with faith and love to the words of the old Book.' It is evident that our most gentle and enlightened naturalist discovered after all that, although Nature had taught him very much, she had not taught him the very things that he most of all needed to know.

I know, of course, that it is the usual thing to quote Wordsworth, as though Wordsworth found his faith in Nature. He did nothing of the kind. He took his faith to Nature, and all Nature echoed it back to him joyously. 'I look abroad upon Nature,' he writes to Sir George Beaumont, 'I look abroad upon Nature, and I meditate upon the Scriptures, especially the Gospel by John, and my creed rises up of itself, with the ease of an exhalation, yet a fabric of adamant.' That is vastly suggestive.

'*The Gospel by Luke!*' says the dying Richard Jefferies.

'*The Gospel by John!*' says William Wordsworth.

These are the golden keys that open Nature's priceless hoard, and it is wonderful how mute she remains until these key-notes have loosed her myriad tongues.

'*It is not in me!*' cries the bush.

'*It is not in me!*' cries the beach.

'It is *here*!' say the Gospels. And clearly that is so. All the untamed and untutored tribes of

Central Africa and of the South Seas have dwelt with Nature for ages. And what has she taught them? They sit round their horrible camp-fires and tear like beasts at human flesh, whilst all the sublimities and transcendencies of Nature spread themselves out on every hand. Nor need we journey to Africa or the coral islands. Facts are stubborn things; and the stern facts of life, as reflected by our police-courts, demonstrate the folly of idealizing the bush. Some of our most revolting criminal cases come from those districts in the Never-Never Country where every prospect pleases, where the landscape is a riot of glorious forestry, and where the earth is a gay profusion of wild flowers. Yet those cases reveal a sordidness, an animalism, and a brutality that have shocked the very dwellers in the slums. Now why these terrible murder cases? Does Nature never say to her children, 'Thou shalt not steal! Thou shalt not kill!'? Does Nature give no code of morals to the children of Nature? 'Alas!' cries Nature, as she hangs her head, '*it is not in me! It is not in me!*' Yes, the dregs of life are not always found in city slums. The bush may become bestial as well as beatific. Let no one misunderstand me. I am not contending that the country is worse than the town. I am instituting no comparison. I am simply saying that there is nothing in the civilization of our cities that can

save us apart from the gospel, and that there is nothing in the beauty of the bush that can save us apart from the gospel. Jesus is the only hope of country and of town. And the transcendent glory of the churches is that they exist to preach HIM.

And so as I sit here in the silence, broken only by the rustling of the birds in the branches overhead, and look out on the crimson seas, I like to think that they are singing 'Jesus, lover of my soul' at the church in town, and that next Sunday, the holiday over, I shall add my voice to theirs. But the sun has vanished, the iguana has slipped into the scrub, and I hear them coo-eeing up at the house.

III

THE REFLECTIONS IN THE RIVER

THE reflections in the river were simply perfect. Every leaf and twig was most exquisitely mirrored in the tranquil waters. The great cliffs were duplicated in the depths, and one could even trace the grain in the strata, and the geological markings, in the inverted representation below. I was reminded of Wordsworth's swan that, on the placid surface of St. Mary's Lake, 'floated double, swan and shadow.' And as the little steamer made her way round the bends and up the reaches of the lovely river, ruining with the wash from her stern the charming water-colours that we had admired from her bows, it seemed to me that the reflections of life hold a wealthy philosophy peculiarly their own. Here is a pretty picture from Hall Caine's *Scapegoat* that will serve us for a starting-point. It was one of those wonderful days that followed the

coming of sight and speech to little Naomi. She had been deaf and dumb and blind; her mother died when she was born; and poor Israel, her father, thought that the affliction of his treasure was the curse of God upon him. But at last hearing came to her, and speech; and, last of all, she saw. Israel could not make enough of it. He was like a child in his glee. He awoke her in the mornings, and took her for rambles over the hills. And one day they went down to the beach and he took her for a row on the smooth and shining waters. 'It was a morning of God's own making, and, for joy of its loveliness no less than of her own bounding life, Naomi rose in the boat and opened her lips and arms to the breeze while it played with the rippling currents of her hair, as if she would drink and embrace it. At that moment a new and dearer wonder came to her, such as every maiden knows whom God has made beautiful, yet none remembers the hour when she knew it first. For, tracing with her eyes the shadow of the cliff and of the continent of cloud that sailed double in two seas of blue, she leaned over the side of the boat, and then saw the reflection of another and lovelier vision.

'"Father," she cried in alarm, "a face in the water! Look! look!"

'"It is your own, my child," said Israel.

'"Mine!" she cried.

' " The reflection of your face," said Israel ; " the light and water make it."

' The marvel was hard to understand,' Hall Caine goes on. ' There was something ghostly in this thing that was herself and yet not herself. She leaned back in the boat and asked Israel if it was still in the water. But when at length she grasped the mystery, the artlessness of her joy was charming. Whenever the boat was at rest she leaned over its bulwark and gazed down into the blue depths.

' " How beautiful ! " she cried, " how beautiful ! "

' She clapped her hands and looked again, and there in the still water was the wonder of her dancing eyes.

' " Oh, how very beautiful ! " she cried, and when she saw her lips move as she spoke, and her sunny hair fall about her restless head, she laughed and laughed again with her heart of glee.'

It was a great and terrible and beautiful day in the life of Naomi when, suddenly, in the depths of the shining waters she came upon herself, saw the wonder of her own face, and looked down through her own blue eyes into the mystery of her own soul. And it was a great and terrible and beautiful day in most of our lives when we were overtaken by a similar experience. The prodigal son, for example. The clause on which the whole story swings, as on a pivot, is simply this : ' He came to himself.' He found

himself, as Naomi found herself, and as most of us, at some time or other, have found ourselves, gazing into his own sad face, and reading the secrets of his own empty soul. 'He came to himself'—it is a tremendous saying when you come to think of it. I feel sure that, one of these days, one of our preachers will pounce upon it, and will instantly proceed to divide it into three parts. I can see him doing it. 'Brethren,' he will say, 'we have here in the first place, the Climax of the *Tragedy* of the Prodigal Son—he got away from himself. We find in these words, too, the Climax of the *Adventure* of the Prodigal Son—he came to himself. And we have here, in the third place, the Climax of the *Delight* of the Prodigal Son, for when he came to himself he very quickly returned to *the father*.' Or perhaps our preacher will be of a psychological and analytical turn of mind. In that case he will proceed with his work of dissection on quite other lines. He will tell us that a man must adopt one of three attitudes towards himself. In the first place, he will say, a man may *avoid himself*, shun himself, cut himself dead; and he will go on to point out that the modern craze for sensational literature, sensational pictures, and sensational dramas is merely the frantic struggle of people who are not on good terms with themselves to get as far from themselves as possible. In the second place, our preacher will point out, a man may bring his unhappy

relations with himself to an open rupture; *he may quarrel with himself*, and even fight against himself. Under this head the preacher will doubtless remind us of the fearful moral tragedies that constantly confront us. As we stand gazing, almost heartbroken, upon these human shipwrecks, do we not invariably exclaim, 'He was his own worst enemy! He ruined himself'? And then, striking a cheerier note, our preacher will go on to point out, as a third alternative, that a man *may make friends with himself*. 'This is the high art of living,' he will tell us in a fine burst of eloquence, 'to be on the best of terms with yourself!' He will quote the great commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' 'How,' he will ask, 'how can you obey that commandment, and love your neighbour with a love that is worth while, unless you have set the standard very high by first of all loving yourself well?' And, really, it is difficult to answer him. But, fortunately, pulpit questions require no audible answer; so that we need not worry about that. If I only knew exactly when and where this sermon, under whichever method of treatment, is likely to be preached, I should make a desperate effort to be present. I can see that our preacher will give us something worth thinking about.

What a wonderful process we pass through when we wake up in the morning! The intermixture of

dreams and realities; the start; the wonder; the rubbing of eyes; the struggle after consciousness; the sleepy glance around; the attempt to recollect; and then the rush back upon us of a thousand memories. It is really a repetition of little Naomi's experience. It is the soul looking into its own face with a start, and gradually becoming reconciled to itself. It is myself coming to myself. And a very great deal depends upon the spirit in which I greet myself at that critical moment. I am very sensitive, and can easily tell when I am not wanted. If I meet a man on the street, and he is sorry that he met me, I can feel his regret underneath his inquiries after my health. And much the same state of things obtains when I greet myself every morning. There are times when I feel sorry to have got back to myself. I wake up with a sense of disappointment. I look into my own eyes and try to be pleasant. But underneath it all I cannot conceal the distaste with which I set out upon the new day in such uncongenial company. I know that I ought not to feel like that. I ought to greet myself with a smile, shake hands with myself, and congratulate myself on the fun that he and I are going to have together. But I am ashamed to confess that I am not yet what I should be. And instead of greeting myself in the morning with a smiling face, I salute my poor self with a snarl. It is very sad, but there it is. It has

often impressed me as a most striking circumstance that the greatest of the prophets and the greatest of the apostles were both sent into the silences for years and years for no other purpose than to get to know themselves. Moses, away at the back of the desert, looked into his own face and down into his own soul; and when he came back he was a changed man, and sought no longer to deliver Israel by murdering Egyptians on the sly. And Paul never got to know himself until he retired to the Arabian solitudes, and made his own acquaintance there.

We instinctively recall the memorable experience that befell Shelley just before his tragic death. 'In the dead of night,' his biographer tells us, 'the poet became conscious of another presence with him in the room. Looking up he saw a cowled figure, wrapped in a flowing mantle, approach and pass him. As he looked, the phantom, dropping the hood, revealed himself, and, gazing deep into the poet's eyes, asked the searching question, "*Art thou satisfied? Art thou satisfied?*"' The face was that of Shelley himself. His short life had been packed to the full, his every day had been spent in the toilsome endeavour to read the Riddle of the Universe. Pleasures which other men had sought he had eschewed that he might pursue his search unhampered. Food and rest he had forfeited when he felt himself to be nearing the goal of his quest. Now in the dead of night his

own soul confronted him with the awful question, '*Art thou satisfied? Art thou satisfied?*' No man who has seen his face reflected back to him after such a fashion will ever forget the fearful and wonderful experience.

I remember once in London seeing a maze that was constructed entirely of mirrors. You paid a penny for the opportunity of losing yourself, and, really, it was not extortionate as compared with the prices men often pay for that privilege. As soon as you entered the door you found yourself confronting yourself in an endless succession of repetitions. Above your head and below your feet and out across an infinite expanse in every direction you saw yourself, yourself, *yourself*. You could not move without running into yourself. It was a most bewildering experience, but it was only a diminutive model of the world at large. For, really, all the machinery of the universe seems designed to bring a man to himself; and, as a consequence, a man finds himself up against himself at every turn. In business a man teaches his assistants to cheat or to tell lies if, by so doing, they can bring coins to his till. After a while his assistants cheat *him* and tell lies to him. What is this but a man looking into his own face, a man up against himself? Dr. Talmage used to tell of a New York merchant who, over the mantelpiece in his office, framed the legend,

'*No Compromise.*' Whatever happened, he insisted on his full pound of flesh. He stickled for the uttermost farthing. But at last a crisis was precipitated in his own line of business, and he was himself compelled to call his creditors together. They pointed to the legend over the mantelpiece, and no man in the history of American commerce was ever more severely treated. He found himself looking into his own face, and that face was very stern.

Even in our social customs and domestic relationships we are everlastingly gazing into our own faces. Think of the matter of company, for example. What are our friendships but reflections of our own face in the waters of the world? Suppose, for the sake of illustration, that I am interested in radium. In a fortnight I shall have automatically discovered a dozen people who are similarly interested. Now each one of them is simply my interest in radium reflecting itself back to me in the personality of each of these companions. Or take the books that I read. We are in the habit of affirming that the books we read determine our own characters. The truth, of course, is that our own characters determine the books that we read. If I am evil, I shall read evil books ; and the evil in the books is simply the reflection of the evil that is in me. If I am learned, I shall read learned books ; and the scholarship in the books is simply

the reflection of my own erudition. If I am shallow, I shall read silly books; and the stupidity of the books is simply the reflection of my own frivolity. The phenomenon greets us at every turn. What are these resemblances to myself that I detect in my children but the reflection of my own idiosyncrasies in a new generation? I look into *their* faces and catch myself gazing into my own. Or take another phase of the same peculiarity. I was reading yesterday one of Mr. A. C. Benson's delightful essays. He tells of a holiday he spent at the home of a country minister. 'I remarked to him,' Mr. Benson says, 'on the delightful manners of the children of the village. The boys touched their hats and smiled, and the girls gave a little bow as we passed. "Yes," he said, "that is all since I came here. When I arrived I found that my predecessor had been very unpopular, and no one showed me the least courtesy. So I began by touching my hat to everybody in the place, man, woman, and child, and they soon picked it up.' Now it is clear that each of these little acts of courtesy on the part of the people was the good man's own politeness returning to him. It was himself raising his hat to himself, bowing to himself, and saluting himself with a friendly smile. In the changed behaviour of the village people he saw the reflection of his own face.

I knew a man in London whom some people considered eccentric. There was certainly a dash of quaintness about him, but he was good as gold and of rare spiritual insight. I remember, on one occasion, that a friend of his wrote to him and asked him for his photograph. 'You will find my photograph,' he replied, 'in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans!' It is a great thing to be able to so read the Bible that I find in it the constant reflection of my own face. Harry Moorhouse was fond of preaching on that great text in the Gospel of John, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' He used to say that he thanked God daily that his name did not appear there. 'I once ordered a typewriter,' he said, 'and it went to another man of the same name as myself. If the text had said that God loved Harry Moorhouse, I should have thought it meant the other Harry Moorhouse; but since it says "*whosoever*," there can be no mistake!' Naomi saw her own face reflected in the blue depths of the limitless ocean; and some of us have peered into the infinities of that great '*whosoever*' until we saw our very selves delightfully reflected there!

I am told that, in a little Continental town, there is a striking and beautiful statue. It represents a

lovely girl gazing into a mirror-like pool of clear water and being fascinated, as Naomi was, by the reflection that she saw. The statue is called 'A Reflection.' It seems that, on that spot, a lady of high degree was saved from a terrible death. She erected the statue as a reflection of the thankfulness of her own heart, and round its base are inscribed in golden letters the words, '*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.*' Human devotion and human service are always 'A Reflection,' always. 'We love Him *because* He first loved us.'

IV

THE CALL OF THE DEEP

SUMMER had set in early. It arrived with a rush, and seemed in a hurry to assert itself. On a close, sultry afternoon, that gave to the cool, wet, shining sands a powerful fascination, I was sitting on a grassy knoll overlooking the long expanse of silvery beach. There was a laugh of triumph in the very waves. After tedious months of waiting, the lonely shore had suddenly come to its own.

The glorious sweep of crescent beach, with its graceful stretches of white sand and its curling waves breaking playfully over patches of mussel-covered rock, never seems quite itself except when it is a riot of boisterous child-life, echoing with peals of rollicking laughter and resounding with shouts of exuberant glee. The old ocean seems to have strewn the shore with pretty shells and dainty seaweed for no other purpose than to woo the young folk to gather up his treasures. And

he has succeeded, for here they are! And the clusters of picnickers, with their billies and baskets, lounging restfully among the dunes; the groups of happy children, busy with their spades and pails in piling fantastic castles whose architectural defects have at least the advantage that they will never become the derision of posterity; the bathers romping in the surf and the paddlers dancing in the foam—all these make up a picture of perfect naturalness and exquisite abandon as satisfying as anything we can reasonably hope to meet with in a strenuous world like this. It is one of those simple and elemental scenes, entirely detached from the accidents of any particular age, and the idiosyncrasies of any particular locality, that always have had, and always must have, their own inherent and resistless charm. The world may change as it will, but the rapture of the seaside is one that delighted those who sought the shores of the Aegean and the Adriatic twenty centuries ago, and that will fascinate no less the last dwellers on the planet. Over rich and poor, over young and old, over all kinds and conditions of men, the spell of the sea has been cast. At one end of the scale we think of the city arab from the squalid purlieus of the suffocating slums revelling in the luxury of a day on the clean white sands; and at the other we recall the picture of Tennyson and of all that

his wizard fancy wove into the commonplaces of the beach at Mablethorpe. Or we think of Wordsworth, the aged poet and philosopher, who, at the same time but on another beach, knew no pleasure comparable to the delight of strolling by the sea and watching the frolics of the children. In the universality and catholicity of its appeal the seaside stands unrivalled.

Everybody is familiar with the process by which the priceless pearls of the Archduchess Rainer, on losing their lustre, are taken to the cliff beneath the castle of Miramar, and lowered in a cage into the waters of the Adriatic; and Time, in the darkness of those ocean-depths, restores to them their vanished health and colour. The annual migration to the seaside, and the tanned skins and lusty countenances with which, after the holidays, the children return to school, would seem to indicate that for them, too, the sea is Nature's chosen tonic and antidote. And, that being so, the call of the deep is not merely a matter of sentiment or fancy, but part of that beneficent but inexorable order by which the very universe is governed. 'I heard,' says Emerson,

> I heard or seemed to hear the chiding sea
> Say, 'Pilgrim, why so late and slow to come?
> Am I not always here, thy summer home?
> Is not my voice thy music, morn and eve?

My breath thy healthful climate in the heats,
My touch thy antidote, my bay thy bath?
Lie on the warm rock-ledges, and there learn
A little hut suffices like a town.'

And Keats, whose frail and delicate life was much of it spent on English and Italian beaches, heard and echoed the same siren call.

O ye! who have your eyeballs vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the sea;
O ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

And, suddenly, even as I watched it, this delightful scene divided itself into two distinct parts. And each of these parts seemed to answer to something in myself. *The sea* has its deeps and its shallows. *The soul* has its deeps and its shallows. The shallows of *the sea* cry out to the shallows of *the soul*. And the deep cries out to the deep. Now we shall miss the whole point if we assume that the shallows are bad and that the deeps alone are worth hearing. The shallows are good, both in the sea and in the soul; and the shallows are right in satisfying themselves with the shallows. It is altogether good for these happy people, in light and festive mood, to put on their holiday dresses

and come down here to splash in the waves and to sport on the sands. It is the *shallow of the sea* calling out to the *shallow in the soul*; and all is well. But all is ill if these same people, having in themselves unfathomable deeps, never allow the *deeps of the sea* to speak to the *deeps of the soul*. It was not the shallow that cried to Paul Dombey. It was the deep, miles and miles away, on which his fancies were hushed and lulled to rest like broken waves.

'The sea, Floy, the sea; what is it that it keeps on saying? I want to know what it says!'

His sister told him that it was only the noise of the rolling waves.

'Yes, yes,' he said, 'but they are always saying something. Always the same thing. What place is over there?'

He sat up in bed, and looked eagerly at the blue horizon. She told him that there was another country opposite, but he said he didn't mean *that*; he meant farther away, *farther away*!

Yes, farther away, farther away; it was the call of *the deep* to *the deep*. It is really wonderful how much the world owes to this call from out the vast. I am writing here at Hobart. And Hobart will never cease to honour the illustrious memory of Sir John Franklin. He was one of Tasmania's early Governors. Franklin Square is within a

few hundred yards of this study of mine, and in the centre of the Square is a fine bronze statue of Sir John. I never look upon it without recalling that seaside holiday of his, in the course of which, the shallows having played with the shallows, the deeps began to call to the deeps. He walked up and down the sands looking out on the infinite expanse of water. He climbed the broken cliffs, and, shading his eyes with his hands, watched the great ships vanish over the distant sky line. The unseen taunted his imagination. It turned the whole course of his life. It was the accident of that timely holiday by the seaside that gave Sir John Franklin to Tasmania and to the world at large. His parents had designed him for the Church, and it was the height of his ambition to become a bishop. But the sight of the sea awoke other instincts within him. Distant voices called him and distant fingers beckoned, until, yielding himself to the spirit of adventure, he became one of the most celebrated navigators of all time. And at the cost of his own life he opened up the frozen North to the more successful explorers who followed. Of Captain Cook almost the same may be said. It was on the sands of Snaith that he first conceived those dreams of oceanic travel that he afterwards translated into such splendid actuality, and by means of which he revolutionized the map

of the world. Lamartine, in recounting the triumphs of islanders, and of coastal peoples, says that the vision of the sea has always roused in men a spirit of lofty independence and nerved them to heroic endeavour. Whilst, therefore, we watch with pleasure the animated scenes that our beaches present in the long summer afternoons, as the shallows respond to the shallows, we may remember too that the deeps are calling to the deeps. Thoughts are being suggested, and impressions made, that will linger and bear fruit long after the gambols upon which we smile have passed into pleasant memories or into the oblivion of forgetfulness. Mark Rutherford tells us of the relish with which, in the cramped days of his early life, he used to walk the ten miles that ordinarily separated him from a sight of the sea. The infinite expanse of shining waters seemed to connect him with all the continents and islands that those rolling breakers laved, and, over and over again, he writes of the sea as *a corrective to the littleness around him.* By its means he contrived to escape the parochialism of that narrow society in which his dreary days were spent. He grew tired of the call of the shallow to the shallow, and felt, in the profundities of his nature, the hunger of the deep for the deep.

Yes, the shallows call to the shallows and the deep calls to the deep. And when we come to

trace the principle a little farther, we touch life at every point. Let us take two practical matters by way of illustration. Think of *Literature* and think of *Love*. There is a place in life for the novel, the love-story, the frolic of an author's fancy. It is sometimes pleasing and restful to leave a world of facts and sail out on the fairy seas of fiction. The product of a great imagination has its irresistible charm. We are among the *shallows of literature*, it is true, but then we are only attempting to minister to the *shallows of life*. The danger comes when we settle down to the shallows; when we never hear the voice of the deep; and when the deep within us becomes neglected and starved. It is good sometimes to get away from the shallows into the deeps; to enter into fellowships with the great masters; to feel the throb of reality; and to grapple with the problems of the universe. There was a time—it seems difficult to believe it now—when men and women read the Bible. They read it, not in texts and snippets, but book by book, just as they would read a history or biography. They watched with admiration the moving pageant of its history; they marked with glowing interest and kindling excitement its scarlet thread of ever-growing purpose; they felt the swing and the cadence of its incomparable poetry; they caught themselves sighing over its tender and graceful

idylls; they trembled beneath the majesty of its awful precepts; and they melted into tears before the pathos and the grandeur of the Cross. It was like the booming of the breakers on the crags. It was like the murmur of fathomless oceans. It was the deep, and it called to the deep; and the deep leapt up to answer its mate.

And there is a falling in love which is the call of the shallow to the shallow. It is the flutter of emotion produced by a handsome figure or a pretty face. It is not to be despised, for it is part of the eternal order of things. But, like the paddlers in the surf, it is only the answer of shallow to shallow. And a life's happiness cannot be built on the shallows. It is when deep answers to deep, and the profundities of one soul echo to the voice of the other, that an understanding has been reached on which a home can be securely built.

But as I look this matter in the face I can see that it holds for me a still deeper secret. There was a time when all the deeps of my being cried out for that which they could nowhere find. Deep echoed to deep as in that stupendous conception in the Book of Job: '*Where shall wisdom be found? The depth of the mine saith, It is not in me! And the depth of the sea saith, It is not in me!*' And so deep answered deep in a pitiful confession of mutual poverty. It is when the soul finds itself in such

distress that it hears the voice of the Eternal. All the depth of the Cross's anguish, all the deeps of the eternal love, become suddenly eloquent. Deep answers to deep, the deep that is in God to the deep that is in Man; and the new day has bravely dawned.

I was wandering the other day up the slopes of Mount Wellington, and, on a mossy bank, I found a tiny spring that trickled shyly out from beneath a huge stone.

'Why, where have you come from, little spring?' I asked in surprise.

'From the deep dark heart of the mountain!' the spring replied.

'And whither away in such a dreadful hurry?' I inquired.

'To the deep dark bed of the ocean!' the spring told me.

'But why have you come from the deeps of the earth, and why do you haste to the deeps of the sea?'

'Because it calls; don't you hear it? Deep calleth unto deep, and I must go!'

And on it rushed; down the hollow among the ferns; joining other rills; laughing as it flung itself into other streams; leaping over waterfalls and dashing through cascades; until at last it found the broad river, and, plunging gaily in, moved grandly with the rushing waters out to the

deep, deep sea. Happy little spring! Away in the dusty heart of Australia, and in the vast interior of Africa, there are great rivers. The deep has heard the call of the deep, and the waters have set out for the sea. *But they never get there.* They lose themselves in the sand. Like the mountain spring and like the upland river, I too have heard the call of the deep. Deep has called to deep, and, like the spring and like the river, I have set out in response. Heaven grant that, like the sparkling spring, I may press on till I get there! It is so easy to grow sluggish and *to lose oneself in the sand.*

V

MY LOST FAITH

THIS morning finds me in a heretical mood. Indeed, I am not only a heretic; I am a rebel. I am in flagrant and open revolt. I have lost the faith of my boyhood. It has gone, and gone for ever, that simple, positive, implicit confidence. I have not only lost it; I scorn it, I deride it, I laugh at it. I am ashamed to think that I ever held it. And yet how firmly I once believed in it! If anybody had suggested to me that it might one day prove false, I should have replied, in boyish phraseology, that pigs might fly. And now it *has* proved false, and, with the air full of biplanes, pigs may be expected to fly at any moment! Yes, the old creed used to stand like adamant. '*I believe in arithmetic!*' I used to say; and I said it with profound conviction. I always had my doubts about grammar; it seemed so utterly arbitrary and void of

authority. And geography seemed very questionable indeed; half a dozen first-class explorers might upset the whole thing, and a big war might paint the entire map in different colours. But I believed in arithmetic. 'I believe in multiplication,' I used to say devoutly; 'that twice two are four; I believe in addition—that two and one are three; I believe in subtraction—that one from five leaves four; I believe in arithmetic, in mathematics, in statistics, in majorities!' Here was my creed, and I used to think, as I repeated it, that I was uttering the last word in the universe, and that when I had so spoken there was no more to be said. And when I first made the Church's acquaintance, I was pleased to find that my faith was the Church's faith and that I could become a humble member of her august fellowship without deserving the brand of the heretic. I discovered with delight that the Church dealt in annual reports, copiously besprinkled with telling numerals, and in statistical tables all added up and worked out with elaborate averages and percentages. 'It is all right!' I said to myself, as I tremblingly submitted myself to the Church's approval. 'It is all right; the Church believes as I believe! She believes in arithmetic as firmly as I do. She believes in multiplication—that twice two are four. She believes in addition—that two and one are three. And she

even believes, though with a wry face, in subtraction—that one from five leaves four. She believes as I do in arithmetic, in mathematics, in statistics, in majorities!' And so I joined the Church with a right good will, not swallowing her dogmas in order to approve myself to her, but rejoicing that she held so tenaciously and taught so clearly the very things that I had come to believe so certainly in the days of my childhood. She believed in arithmetic, and so did I. We were drawn together by that powerful and natural affinity. And now it has all gone, gone like a dream, that boyish faith of mine. I no more believe in the Rule of Three than I believe in the Rule of Thumb. I no longer believe in multiplication or in addition, and certainly I no longer believe in subtraction. I have no faith in mathematics, in statistics, or in majorities. The whole thing is to me a species of Mumbo-Jumbo. I despise myself for ever having been deceived by it. My old faith is gone, and I am glad it is gone. What the Church will say when my defection, my rebellion, is reported, I cannot imagine. But here I stand, my old faith stripped from me, naked but not ashamed.

If any of my old friends are inclined to think harshly of me for my betrayal, I can only plead that I was compelled by two separate forces to abandon my former faith. My Bible and my experience

of the world alike made it impossible for me to believe any longer in arithmetic. I think more respectfully of grammar now than I used to do at school, and I entertain a much higher regard for geography, but arithmetic has gone for ever. After reading my Bible, and gaining some practical knowledge of men and things, I could never trust figures any more. Figures are like fairy-tales—they serve a useful purpose in developing the imagination of young children—but when you have said that, there is no more to be said. No man can know either the world or his Bible and believe in arithmetic. I blush with very shame to think that I ever really fancied that two and two made four, or even that one and one made two.

Now when you come to think of it, there is more in this matter of mathematics than one would at first suppose. The philosophers have got into some glorious tangles over it. In criticizing the doctrines of Kant, Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity, declared, for example, that three and two make five. It seemed on the face of it a fairly safe assertion. 'Three and two make five,' the learned Master of Trinity declared. 'We cannot,' he went on, 'conceive it otherwise. We cannot by any freak of thought imagine three and two to make seven.' But G. H. Lewes, the author of the *History of Philosophy* and the companion of George Eliot,

will not allow this for a moment. He maintains, and he quotes Herschell in support of his contention, that there is nothing at all self-evident in the contention that three and two make five. And John Stuart Mill once boldly affirmed that he could easily imagine a state of things under which two and two do not make four.

Now here is the doctrine of addition in trouble already. The philosophers have their doubts about it, and the philosophers are not alone. The thing has been fought out in court. An insurance case was being argued before a Bench of seven judges some years ago, and everybody knows of the implicit faith that the average insurance company puts in actuarial computations. Figures are a perfect fetish here. Well, one of the barristers was reeling off a string of telling statistics, and was evidently making more of them than he was entitled to do. Imagine his bewilderment when Lord Craighill quietly interpolated :

'But two and two, you know, do not always make four!'

The whole court was astounded at the judicial interjection. 'If two and two do not make four,' snorted Lord Young impatiently, 'what on earth are we sitting here for?'

Whereupon, to the immense relief of Lord Craighill, Lord McLaren came to his assistance.

'Well, you know, it all depends,' said Lord McLaren; 'there must be a certain unity and conformity between them; you could scarcely say that two candles and two tons of coal make four!'

Now this raises a very nice point. I am reminded of the old soldier who had an insatiable passion for tabulating and adding up things, and who recorded the outstanding achievements and experiences of his life in this way:

Battles	7
Wounds	6
Children	8
Total	21

On the face of it there is a good deal to be said for the theory that seven and six and eight make twenty-one; but Lord McLaren would rule it out, and I am sure the philosophers would not allow it. Two candles and two tons of coal do *not* make four. That is precisely the point at which I suspect the statistics that the Church sometimes flourishes so proudly. You must know what the things are that you are counting. If you cannot add candles to coal, it is certain that you cannot add Judas to John. The staggering discovery that the Church

made in the days of her earliest infancy was that eleven and one do not make twelve; but that sensational revelation has not materially shaken the Church's childlike confidence in figures.

Take the parable of the talents, for example. Here, if anywhere, there is employment for the ecclesiastical statistician; here, if anywhere, he should be in his element. 'The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods.' What happened? Ask our ecclesiastical statistician. The statistician, believing in the ridiculous fallacy that two and two make four, gets to work adding things up. The good man delivered to his servants 5+2+1 talents = 8; and received from them on his return 10+4+1 talents = 15. Whereupon the statistician beams with delight. How splendidly the three servants did! But it will never do. One and one and one do not make three. Five and two and one do not make eight. Ten and four and one do not make fifteen. These totals, three and eight and fifteen, so dear to the heart of the man who believes in arithmetic, do not come into the story at all. The three men are never added together. Service and sloth can no more be added together than can coal and candles, or John and Judas. The church secretary, believing in arithmetic, can add me up with a lot of other

people if he likes; but in the Day of Judgement the addition will all be exploded. I shall no longer be lost in the crowd. The three servants will answer each for himself—one and one and one. For one and one and one will not make three in the calculations of the last day. Even now one pound one shilling and one penny do not count as three in any reasonable scale of reckoning.

That is a great story that Gibbon tells of Abu Taher: 'In a daring inroad beyond the Tigris Abu Taher advanced to the gates of Bagdad with no more than 500 horse. By the special order of Moclader the bridges had been broken down, and the person or head of Abu was expected every hour by the commander of the faithful. His lieutenant, from a motive of pity, apprised Abu Taher of his danger and recommended a speedy escape. "Your master," said the intrepid Carmathian to the messenger, "is at the head of 30,000 soldiers; three such men as these are wanting in his host." At the same instant, turning to face his three companions, he commanded the first to plunge a dagger into his breast, the second to leap into the Tigris, and the third to cast himself headlong down a precipice. They obeyed without a murmur. "Relate," continued the imaum, "what you have seen; before the evening your general shall be chained among my dogs." Before the evening the camp

was surprised and the menace was executed.' The statistician would have reckoned the forces of Abu Taher as only 500; and as he counted the 30,000 impotent defenders of Bagdad the figures would have rolled musically over his tongue. For heroes and wasters, pounds, shillings, and pence are all alike to him. Each counts one. Let all who swear by statistics take warning.

Now that is precisely the weakness of democracy. A democratic form of government is, I suppose, the nearest approach to a perfect form of government that has ever been invented; yet nobody would argue that it *is* a perfect form of government. And the chasm that yawns between it and perfection is the chasm into which we have just been peering. It adds Judas and John together, saying as it does so that one and one make two. It gives the ne'er-do-weel, the waster, and the scoundrel the same voice in the affairs of State as the man of intelligence and integrity to whom the whole community looks up in respect. 'If there is one lesson written more legibly than another upon the annals of the world, it is that majorities are almost always wrong!' So said Mr. W. S. Lilly in *The Nineteenth Century* the other day. 'I hate the very word *majority*,' George Gissing makes one of his characters to say; 'it is the few, the very few that have always kept alive whatever of good

we see in the race. There are individuals who outweigh, in every kind of value, generations of ordinary people.' And Schiller asks a question to the same purport :

> What are mere numbers? Numbers are but nonsense;
> Wisdom is never found save with the few:
> Votes should be rightly weighed, not only counted;
> Sooner or later must that State go under
> Where numbers rule and foolishness determines.

I do not know what one and one make ; I only know what they can never, *never* make. One and one can never by any possibility make two. If one and one are like coal and candle, like Judas and John, like the good and faithful servant on the one hand and the wicked and slothful servant on the other, you cannot add them together at all. But if they are of such a character that you *can* add them together, then one and one will make much more than two. I was travelling on a ship the other evening. I was strolling on the port side of the deck ; I noticed another minister strolling on the starboard side. Here we were—one and one. Presently we introduced ourselves to each other, and spent the evening in delightful comradeship. Some of the thoughts suggested by our chat that night will cling to me to my dying day. Inspirations visited the two of us together that could never

have come to either of us singly. And when we went at length to our cabins we both recognized how very much more than two one and one may often make. To be sure! Hopeful and Christian felt the same thing, and commented upon it in their wonderful walk. In his *Life of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, too, Henry James makes the casual remark that 'every man works better when he has companions.' Now if every man works better when he has companions, it is clear that, when he has companions, every man becomes a man and a quarter, or a man and a half, or even two men, and counting is out of the question. That is just it: counting is always out of the question. It is bad news for the census-enumerator, but it is true. Somebody asked the other day how many men there were on Robinson Crusoe's island. The census-enumerator looks wonderfully wise and, with an air of finality, says 'One!' It is ridiculous. It has been pointed out that Robinson Crusoe took with him to the island everybody who had ever taught him anything, everybody whom he copied or imitated or followed. All the men and women who had been his relatives and friends and teachers and guides went with him to his exile. Otherwise his mind would have been a blank and he an imbecile. The census-taker gets out his form and calls 'One!' But we, being wiser, know that there were thousands.

That is the worst of trying to count. Elijah tried it, and he also said 'One!' and he said it very confidently. 'I, even I only, am left.' 'And the Lord said unto him, There are seven thousand!' It was a bad blunder, but no worse than all the statisticians make. Arithmetic is an impossible science. I do not believe that any man who has once fallen in love will ever be persuaded that one and one are only two. I do not believe that any happy couple, into the sweet shelter of whose home a little child has come, will ever be convinced that two and one are only three. And I am certain that no such pair, from whose clinging and protecting arms their treasure has been snatched, will credit that one from three leaves two. In the great crises of life one's faith in figures breaks down hopelessly.

I was reading the other day a story of a census-taker who was working on the east side of lower New York, and came to a tenement that was literally crowded with children. To the woman who was bending over the wash-tub he said:

'Madam, I am the census-taker; how many children have you?'

'Well, lemme see,' replied the woman, as she straightened up and wiped her hands on her apron. 'There's Mary and Ella and Delia and Susie and

Emma and Tommy and Albert and Eddie and Charlie and Frank and——'

'Madam,' interrupted the census man, 'if you could just give me the number——'

'Number!' she exclaimed indignantly. 'I want you to understand that we ain't got to *numbering* 'em yet! We ain't run out o' *names*!'

The more I see of the world and the more I read my Bible the more clearly do I see that I am living in a world of Marys and Ellas and Delias and Susies, and not in a world of tens and hundreds and thousands and millions. My Bible only introduces arithmetic to make it look ridiculous. What about the story of the spies? What about the story of Gideon? What about the story of Goliath? Seventy times seven works out at about a billion in the New Testament. When the Bible deals in quantities at all, it generally tells you that things are as the stars of the sky for multitude and as the sands of the sea-shore innumerable. 'Are they few that be saved?' some one inquired of Jesus; and the only answer is the picture of a multitude that no man can number, a host that no statistician can count!

And so I say 'Good-bye!' to my old faith in figures. I am really glad to be rid of it. I do not know what the Church, with her carefully compiled statistics, will say about it. But I am not without

hope that she may even yet escape from the limitations of the Book of Numbers into the immensities of a boundless Bible, and the heresy which afflicts me to-day may be her own pride and profession to-morrow. Who can tell?

VI

THE ANGEL OF THE KITCHEN

I AM neither a gourmand nor an epicure. The modest demands that I make upon the kitchen are suggested by the simplest possible tastes, and they are met with an appetizing delicacy and a large-hearted generosity that put my deserts to confusion and shame. I state this frankly at the very outset, lest it should be suspected that, in an unguarded moment, I am about to give expression to a complaint. I am ridiculously stupid; but I have not yet fallen to such an abysmal depth. When I hear a man complaining of the product of his kitchen, I feel like addressing him in the homely but expressive phrase of John Bunyan: 'Thou talkest like a newly-hatched chicken, and thou talkest like one upon whose head the shell is to this day!' He must be an infinite simpleton who attacks the kitchen. A slave may, in sudden wrath, shake his fist in the face of a Caesar; but

he will afterwards deplore his gust of ungovernable passion. A man may, in an awful moment, rise in revolt against the cook; but the cook feeds the flames and stokes the fires that drive the engines of the universe; and sooner or later that intrepid mortal will bitterly lament his rash temerity. No, no! this is not a criticism. I am not mad. It is rather a eulogy, a panegyric, a spontaneous outburst of most grateful praise. There hangs at the Louvre a great painting by Murillo, in which the artist pictures the interior of a kitchen. But the toilers moving to and fro are not mortals in old work-a-day dresses, but beautiful white-winged angels. One serenely puts the kettle on the fire to boil; one is lifting a pail of water with most perfect grace; one is at the dresser, taking down the plates; whilst a youthful cherub is moving here and there, his face radiant at being permitted to take part in such sacred tasks. The charm of the picture lies in the fact that no incongruity strikes the beholders. It seems the most natural thing in the world that the angels should be busying themselves with pots and pans. It is not that the angels are degraded into being cooks; it is that the kitchen is made to seem worthy of the angels. There is a story in the Old Testament of an angel who did actually prepare a meal for a prophet; and the New Testament contains a still more marvellous

record. The Lord of all the Angels, after His resurrection, called His disciples from their boats and nets. 'And as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals, and fish laid thereon, and bread.' It really looks as though the kitchen is an angel-haunted realm; and the art of cooking a diviner one than we have sometimes been accustomed to think.

An eminent satirist has recently proposed the formation of one more Society—an S.S.S.S.—a Society for the Suppression of Superfluous Societies! His witticism has not, however, prevented the formation in Paris, under distinguished auspices, of a Club des Cent, which cherishes, as the supreme reason for its existence, the laudable ambition of reviving the loftiest traditions of European cookery. The cuisine art, in the judgement of these enthusiasts, has fallen upon evil days. The pressure of modern life, and the multiplication of popular restaurants, have degraded a science that was once revered as almost classical. The members of the Club des Cent read, I imagine, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and sigh sadly for a return of the days when such banquets as the feast of Sallust were possible. And even the romances of Harrison Ainsworth make their mouths water. 'Turning up their noses at the boiled capons, roasted bustards, stewed quails, and other light matters, the guests in the Tower,

by one consent, assailed a large shield of brawn, and speedily demolished it. Their next incursion was upon a venison pasty—a soused pig followed—and while one prepared himself for a copious draught of Rhenish by a dish of anchovies, another, who had just emptied a huge two-handed flagon of bragget, sharpened his appetite with a plate of pickled oysters. A fawn, roasted whole, with a pudding in its inside, now claimed their attention, and was pronounced delicious. One then helped himself to a shoulder of mutton and olives; another to a couple of roasted ruffs; and a third revived his flagging powers with a dish of buttered crabs.' All this was preparatory to the baked swan, served in rye-paste; the crane, roasted whole; and the peacock, decorated with its own tail. Peter Trusbot, the cook, worked wonders, Ainsworth tells us confidentially. 'In the old terms of his art, he leached the brawn, reared the goose, sauced the capon, spoiled the fowls, flushed the chickens, unlaced the rabbits, winged the quails, minced the plovers, thighed the pigeons, bordered the venison pasty, tranched the sturgeon, undertranched the tunny-fish, tamed the crab, and barbed the lobster.' Such a glorious place was the kitchen in its golden age! But our Parisian clubmen lament that it has lost its aestheticism and has become commonplace. These idealists have set their hearts on a renaissance.

They have invented an elaborate network of methods and machinery by which they hope to establish the fame of any chef whose work commends itself to them as approaching the ideal, whilst they will endeavour to scowl out of public tolerance any base slattern whose work betrays no serious recognition of the historic importance and artistic possibilities of his craft.

I tremble for the Club des Cent when the Society for the Suppression of Superfluous Societies once gets properly under way! Few of us are pining for a recrudescence of that artificial and stilted age when a new dish was accounted a greater discovery than a new continent, and when cooks committed suicide if the fish arrived five minutes late. Such anomalies characterize *blasé* and exhausted peoples from whom seriousness and virility have fled. Yet I confess that, when I hear these Parisian dreamers talking about the historic importance of the kitchen, I feel that they are striking a true note. For man is essentially a cooking animal. To quote the famous phrase of an eminent French philosopher, he is 'born a roaster.' This is the one unmistakable frontier that separates him from the brute creation. There are, of course, many other things that we do, and that the beasts of the field do not attempt. But, in respect of most of these accomplishments, it can be shown, either that the

habit is not universal among men, or else that some reasonable approach is made to it by the lower creatures. But in cooking we have a sharp, clear line of demarcation. Anthropologists of every school are agreed that the manufacture of fire, and its application to food, are to be found among all tribes and races of men; whilst naturalists, on the other hand, are unable to show that any inkling of this potent force has ever been discovered among the furry and feathered dwellers in the forests. Readers of Jack London's masterpiece are never likely to forget the scene in which White Fang, the wolf, saw the Indians make fire for the first time. 'Women and children were carrying sticks and branches to Grey Beaver. Suddenly White Fang saw a strange thing like mist beginning to rise from the sticks and moss beneath Grey Beaver's hands. Then, amongst the sticks themselves, appeared a live thing, twisting and turning, of a colour like the colour of the sun in the sky. White Fang knew nothing about fire.' But he watched the wonder of it and worshipped. To him these man-animals 'were creatures of mastery, possessing all manner of unknown and impossible potencies; overlords of the alive and the not-alive; making obey that which moved; imparting movement to that which did not move; and making life, sun-coloured and biting life, to grow out of dead moss

and wood! They were fire-makers, these man-animals! They were fire-makers, and they were gods!' It may, therefore, be accepted as an axiom that the very act and article of cooking is the sign and proof of our real humanity. Man is essentially a roaster; and by his very roasting he proves himself a man.

Moreover, it is safe to say that, up to a certain point at any rate, man's advance in civilization and refinement has been exactly commensurate with his progress in the art of cooking. Students of Gibbon will remember that, in tracing the evolution of the northern peoples from savagery to greatness, he attaches considerable importance to the character of their diet and the manner of its preparation. During the nomadic stage of national life, when the primitive tribe was simply a roving horde, it drove its herds of cattle continually before it. Meat and milk were the sole articles of food. The camp, never well arranged, often resembled a butcher's shambles; and the historian, after referring to these sanguinary scenes, to the exclusive diet of animal food which resulted from them, and to the crude and barbarous manner in which the food was prepared for consumption, attributes to these factors the perpetuation, through long ages, of the ferocious and barbaric propensities of the people. But when the nations reached their places

of permanent settlement, and devoted themselves in consequence to the pursuit of agriculture, they naturally mingled the fruits of the field with the flesh to which they had been accustomed, whilst the new style of living afforded them leisure to devote to the more careful and elaborate preparation of their food. The effect upon national character quickly became apparent, and a certain gentility and refinement soon manifested themselves among their tribal characteristics. The cook came to his own, and he straightway changed the destinies of empires. The members of the Club des Cent, when they defend their organization before the Committee of the Society for the Suppression of Superfluous Societies, will probably argue, with some show of reason for their contention, that the history of civilization is almost identical with the history of cookery.

Going one step farther, it really seems to me that a school of cookery is an order of priesthood. The cook is not very far from the kingdom of God. He is a priest presiding continually over a frightful hecatomb of slaughtered victims. Innocent victims, too, and innocent victims who have died that, by dying, they may nourish the life of others more guilty than themselves. Upon this holocaust of sacrificial blood the cook gazes continually; and he must be blind as the blindest bat yet born if

he does not perceive in it all an expression of that great vicarious law that is the very crux and climax of the gospel. The kitchen table is an altar, if the cook only knew it; and he is himself a priest, presiding every day over scenes of solemn sacrifice. Yes, the table is an altar, and Professor Robertson Smith, that prince of Hebraists, tells us that we miss the whole spiritual beauty of the Old Testament unless we see that the sacrificial altar was the natural evolution of the sacrificial table. And the white cloth that we saw in church last Sunday, with the broken bread and the chalice of outpoured wine upon it, is in the direct line of this holy and beautiful succession.

It is not strange, therefore, that the kitchen is sometimes crowded with angels. It would be wonderful, all things considered, if no heavenly visitants appeared there. 'Dining in company is a divine institution,' says Edward White, in his *Minor Moralities*, 'so let the art of cooking be honoured by all men. Cookery distinguishes mankind from the beasts that perish. Happy is the woman whose daily table is the result of forethought. Her husband shall rise up and call her blessed. And let our young women imitate Sarah. Let them see how that venerable princess went quickly to her kneading-trough and oven, and prepared an extempore collation of rice and cakes for the angels!'

Cakes for angels! The angels in the kitchen! Dear me! how the angels and the cooks seem to meet and mingle at every turn! Between the cooks and the angels there seems to be some subtle affinity, some indefinable relationship! The whole matter is too deep for me, as I feared, when I set out, that it would be. I can only see that things secular and things sacred are inextricably interwoven. Heaven invades earth at every point; and the more sweetly human a thing is, the more solemnly divine it is as well. I cannot write half a dozen lines about cooks without coming on the angels; and next time I venture tremblingly into the kitchen I shall confidently expect to hear such songs as the shepherds heard in the fields near Bethlehem.

VII

A PHILOSOPHY OF PICKLES

I DO remember my faults this day, and repent in dust and ashes. There is something painfully humiliating to me in the thought that I have written on so many subjects of a purely ephemeral character, and of a distinctly transitory interest, and have never dealt with the great doctrine of condiments, seasonings, sauces, and pickles. I remember somewhere to have read that Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper. My ignorance is so abysmal that I do not know if this classical reference is to history or mythology. All that I *do* know is that, if Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper, he showed more respect to the unhappy pickle-pot than I have done. And thus he puts me to shame and confusion of face. But now that my disgraceful neglect has been rebuked, I must make up for lost time. There is more in a pot of pickles than meets the eye. I do not wish that remark to be interpreted

literally. I certainly do not wish it to be interpreted cynically. I wish it to be interpreted philosophically, and therefore sanely. There is more in a pot of pickles, I repeat, than meets the eye. The pickles represent those things that we do not really need, yet that we like so much to have. They are things which we should not dream of eating by themselves, yet they impart a delightful piquancy to other things that we *do* need, and which do not appeal so powerfully to the palate. Glancing at the table, I see that my lunch to-day is to consist of cold shoulder of mutton. And in the centre of the table I notice that the genius that presides over such things has placed the chutney and the piccalilli. I must confess that this seems in perfect keeping with the eternal fitness of things. I could not define the subtle relationship between mutton and piccalilli if I were allowed forty volumes in which to do it ; but that they *are* related is obvious. The sceptic who would doubt it would probably question the affinity between the chops and tomato sauce that meant so much to Mr. Pickwick, between roast beef and horseradish, between boiled mutton and capers, or between roast pork and apple sauce. And, because he would question these indisputable though inscrutable relationships, we can afford to ignore his doubts as to the connexion between cold shoulder and piccalilli. Let him doubt !

Here they are! And now that they are here, I recognize at once that three alternatives are presented to me. The best possible course would be to eat the mutton and leave the pickles; but I am not a saint. The worst possible course would be to eat the pickles and leave the mutton; but I am not a fool. And so, because I am myself something of a compromise between the saint and the fool, I effect a compromise between these two courses, and eat both mutton and pickles. But compromises can never be logically defended, and the relentless logic of the situation starts another question: if the *best* possible course would be to eat the mutton and leave the pickles, and if the *worst* possible course would be to eat the pickles and leave the mutton, why have those pickles been placed on the table? Is it not clearly a conspiracy to poison me? Has it not all the appearance of a diabolical plot bent on wrecking the constitution—I mean my constitution? No, there is no malign purpose afoot. We need not send for the police. I find on reconsideration that I have made a mistake. I said that when the pickles were placed on the table *three* alternatives are presented to me. I was wrong; there are *four*. And it is to head me off from that fourth desperate course that a certain amount of risk has been taken. When the chutney and the piccalilli have been

neatly arranged on the table-centre, it is fully recognized that tragic consequences may ensue. I may eat the pickles with the mutton knowing perfectly well that it would be better for me to eat the mutton without the pickles. I may even eat the pickles and leave the mutton ; there is no law on the statute book to prevent me. But these frightful hazards are deliberately taken because it is shrewdly foreseen that, unless the pickles are placed there, I may madly rush to the fourth terrible alternative. I may come to the table with a jaded appetite, glance at the nutritious but unalluring joint, shake my head sadly over its failure to tempt my palate, and leave the room without touching a morsel of food. This, then, is the fourth alternative : I may eat neither mutton nor pickles. It is to guard against this major contingency that the minor risks are taken. It is considered better on the whole that I should be partially poisoned than that I should be totally starved. The pickle-pot is an ingenious device to prevent me from giving the cold shoulder the cold shoulder.

Now this philosophy of the pickle-pot confronts us daily. I need not go into the dining-room to find it. I can stay in the study, for it operates as much in the one room as in the other. Look at my books, for example. A few of them have very handsome bindings and glittering gilt edges

The nice bindings and the gilt edges are, of course, the chutney and the piccalilli. The insidious and subtle reasoning lurking behind these costly embellishments is the hope of making the contents more attractive to me. It is expected that I shall fly upon the mutton when my palate is tormented by the pungent odour of the pickles, whereas if the pickles were not there, the mutton might remain untasted. There is certainly something in it. A princely edition, bound in calf, with thick pages, large type, glorious margins, steel engravings, and a certain indefinable smack of superiority, does conduce to very pleasant reading. If you already possess a good appetite, you can, of course, take your literary mutton with magnificent relish, though it be served up in a paper-covered and dog-eared edition. But many a good book I remember to have read, not because I particularly wished to read it, but because I had the opportunity of reading it in a really beautiful get-up. The smell of the pickles was too much for me. There is, of course, an element of danger here. It must be distinctly understood that I am only commending the pickles so far as the pickles induce us to devour the mutton. It is the mutton that matters. It is possible, as I just now pointed out, to greedily devour the pickles whilst leaving the carving-knife unsoiled. But it leads to dyspepsia, doctors' bills,

and certain death. Robert Burns was one day visiting a Scottish nobleman, and was politely ushered into a stately library. Having to wait a while, his lordship not having finished sipping his coffee, the poet reached down a splendidly-bound edition of Shakespeare. It was worm-eaten, but otherwise as good as new. The volume cracked, after the way of new books, as he opened it ; its contents had evidently never been looked at. Burns felt in his waistcoat pocket, took out his pencil, and wrote on the fly-leaf of the dainty volume :

> Through and through the inspired leaves,
> Ye maggots, make your windings ;
> But oh ! respect his lordship's taste
> And spare his golden bindings !

It served his lordship right. It serves us all right when, living exclusively on pickles, we suffer for it. I admire the very beautiful styles in which the Bible is published nowadays. Bibles choicely bound are like apples of gold in pictures of silver. But the handsome and dainty bindings must answer to this test if they are to redeem themselves from contempt : they must lead us to *read* the Bible more than we read it in the old plain covers. The pickles are good if they lead us to eat the mutton ; but on pickles alone we must starve.

Mr. Pickwick advised Mr. Snodgrass, when there

were two crowds, to shout with the largest. But Mr. Pickwick, in this instance, was grievously mistaken. If there are two crowds, and they are both shouting, it is perfectly safe to assume that they are both wrong. And Mr. Snodgrass had better not shout with either. Take this matter of pickles, by way of example. There are two crowds :

'*Away with Pickles! Away with Pickles!*' cries Crowd Number One.

'*Give us Pickles! Nothing but Pickles!*' cries Crowd Number Two.

With neither of these crowds will I shout. I like pickles—*with mutton.* I often eat mutton, allured by the pickles, when, but for the pickles, I should eat no mutton at all. I feel my pickles to be just that little something extra that makes all the difference ; and I fancy that Nature supports me in this feeling of mine. What about the element of beauty added to the element of utility ? Is not this the mutton-and-pickles problem on a slightly higher plane ? Why is fruit so beautiful—the blush of the apple and the bloom of the peach ? Are we not getting suspiciously near to our original doctrine of the pickle-pot ? Suppose Nature served up the identical material that I find in a peach just as a grocer serves up butter, in cubes and lumps ! It would not attract me. But when she decks the peach with such delicate tints and irresistible

charm, my mouth waters, and I cannot rest till I have devoured that peach. Raspberries from the cane are delicious, but raspberry-pulp from a can! Ugh! Nature knows how to coax me into taking my mutton. Her pickles are too tempting for me. And I fancy that the picture I have drawn is capable of being painted on a broader canvas. Nature is just as anxious that I should love the planet as that I should love the peach. And so she goes out of her way to captivate my fancy. Ruskin has reminded us that 'it would have answered all the necessary purposes of the sky if, once in three days or thereabouts, a great, ugly black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. Instead of this there is not a moment of any day of our lives when Nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and upon such perfect principles of beauty that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our ceaseless pleasure.'

Now I have a notion that by means of all this Nature is trying to teach us something. She is giving us hints—and practical ones, too. I am too prone to think that I have my work to do and that all that is required is that I should do

it. But it does not follow. I may do all that can reasonably be expected of me and yet give a general feeling of dissatisfaction to all concerned. That is surely the inner meaning of Christ's great saying about the Second Mile: 'Whosover shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.' My service is valued by what I do, cheerfully and of my own free will, over and above the stern necessities and compulsions of the case. 'Why,' said Adam Bede to the men who dropped their tools as the clock struck, 'the very grindstone will go on turning a bit after you loose it.' I was reading yesterday Mr. Charles H. E. Brookfield's *Random Reminiscences*. It is a delightful book—as piquant as the pickles themselves. In the course of his story he tells us of his serious illness. 'My attack was a pretty bad one,' he says. 'Sir William Jenner was called in in consultation. He was a delightful man, and his bedside manner was a lesson to all young doctors. He would enter the room slowly, fold up his great-coat, put his hat on the top of it, with his gloves inside, and then settle down into an easy-chair and converse for a while upon general topics, as though you were the only patient he had in the world.' Now here are two things—Sir William's medicine and Sir William's manner. The great doctor's manner was quite valueless in itself; but the doctor's manner, fortifying the doctor's medicine,

made his treatment a delight. Here we are face to face with the same philosophy : the manner and the medicine, the pickles and the mutton, the bloom and the peach, the glory and the rain-clouds. As I sit down to lunch, and reach for the piccalilli, I remind myself that my life may conform to certain standard requirements as the shoulder of mutton conforms to the gastric necessities of my mysterious and complex anatomy ; but unless I am careful to supply a certain something extra to add piquancy to the feast, weary men will shake their heads gloomily and will turn sorrowfully away. Oh, that something extra !

> The little more, and how much it is !
> The little less, and what worlds away !

It is that something extra—the manner as well as the medicine, the bloom as well as the flavour, the voluntary mile after the compulsory mile has been travelled—that glorifies everything. This, it seems to me, is the doctrine of the pickle-pot.

PART III

I

THE WINGS OF THE MORNING

I AM sitting here at the open window with my fountain-pen for company. It is one of those delicious evenings that so often follow upon the heels of a hot and trying day. My window faces the west, and the giant form of Mount Wellington towers up before me. It seems only a few moments ago that I came to this very window on rising, just to look at the mountain and see what kind of a day it was going to be. It was morning then. It is evening now. But where has that morning gone? It was here a few hours ago. It is here no longer. It must be somewhere. Give me its latitude and longitude. Where is it? Ah, to be sure, yonder it flies! Mount Wellington stands out bravely against a glowing sky. The clouds above its head are a moving pageant of purple and gold. *There* goes my morning! Away over there the sun is rising upon some other scribbler, whilst he

leaves me here in the gloaming. If only I could follow, skipping over the ranges and leaping across the seas, I should see him at this very minute lighting up the old familiar scenes that I know so well. He is gilding the windows of the dear old home ; he is sending the bees from the hives under the wall to the roses over the door and the lavender down the garden. He is looking down, too, on the school that will presently buzz with the same old drone of lessons, and upon the playground that holds wondrous secrets if only it could speak ! Yes, the sun is vanishing over the mountain, but he is taking my morning to the old folks at Home. I am left here in the dark. In a few moments I shall have to light the gas, draw down the blinds, and leave the open window. My morning, that seemed so fair and fresh and invigorating, is gone, gone, *gone* ; but it is pleasant to think that it is over there, and that those I know so well are revelling in its radiance.

Sitting here and losing myself in a lazy reverie like this, it occurs to me that it was this selfsame beautiful phenomenon that gave us one of the loveliest phrases in our literature. For I am not the first man since the world began who has sat watching the sunset and wondering what had become of his morning. The Jews used to do the same thing thirty centuries ago. They watched the

glowing sun sink slowly into a crimson sea, and wondered upon what strange lands its beams now shone. The morning had flown. It had taken wing. It was away over there, over there, *over there*! And, in a fine transport of poetic rapture, one of their poets fancied himself flying after it and gazing upon the wilds where now it rested. 'If I take *the wings of the morning*,' he cried ecstatically, 'if I take *the wings of the morning*, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.' As I sit here to-night thinking of the morning that has so soon left me and flown to other lands, and as I wish that I could borrow its wings—*the wings of the morning*—and follow in its wake, it adds a fresh charm to the cool of the evening to reflect that exactly the same sentiment surged through the soul of Israel's sweetest singer one summer's evening many, many years ago. Like me, he longed for the wings of the morning; and, by some strange magic, our very longing seems to give us wings more powerful than those we yearned for, and we cross, not the seas but the centuries, and enter into very pleasant fellowship.

We have all smiled at the old story of the boy who set out to find the pot of gold that was said to be hidden at the foot of the rainbow. The beautiful bow eluded him as he clambered up the hills and

scampered down the valleys. And although he never came upon the jar of precious metal, it was wonderful how much he gained in the course of his quest. We have smiled, I say, at the story; but it is the history of the world in miniature. It is Herodotus and Caesar, Grote and Gibbon, Carlyle and Freeman, Hume and Macaulay, all condensed into the compass of an exquisite picture. For, when you come to think of it, what is the difference between looking at the rainbow and then setting out to find the pot of gold, and looking at the sunset and starting off to find the vanished morning? And, ever since our little race began, men have watched their mornings receding over the horizon each evening, and have felt their fancy stirred beyond endurance by the thought of the unknown lands to which that departing dawn had flown. And, like the boy in search of the foot of the rainbow, they have pushed their little vessels out into the tossing western seas in their effort to follow the dying gleam and track the retreating daybreak. The mind of man loves to be teased and taunted by such things. I knew a little maiden, years ago, whose brother left home on a long holiday. At length the day arrived when Arthur was to come home, and Jessie was to go to meet him. As soon as it was light, the little maid was wide awake, clapping her hands in her excitement.

'Whatever is wrong with you, Jessie?' her mother asked. 'Why don't you lie down and go to sleep?'

'Oh, I can't go to sleep, mother,' Jessie replied; 'Arthur's coming home!'

'But that's nothing,' the mother reasoned; 'Arthur teases you, you silly girl!'

'Oh, yes, mother,' Jessie admitted, '*but I love to be teased*!'

I am inclined to think that poor artless little Jessie was speaking, not for herself alone, but for the whole wide world; only she had more candour and less reserve than characterizes most of us. If, like her, we blurted out the whole truth, we should confess that we dearly love to be teased. We love the mountains that dare us to scale them; we love the seas that challenge us to cross them; we love the Poles that proudly defy our approach. These are the things that have teased the fancy of Man and lured him to his finest exploits. We owe more than we can tell to the wings of the morning. 'Westward the course of empire takes its way!' exclaimed Bishop Berkeley two centuries ago. But why? Why has civilization always moved towards the sunset? Why did it pass from Asia to Europe, from China to Persia, from Persia to Assyria, from Assyria to Greece, from Greece to Rome, from Rome to Britain, and spread from Britain across to America?

It was simply because men were lured round the world in pursuit of the vanishing mornings. 'After the morning!' they cried, and pursued the setting sun. They could not bear to think in the summer evenings that the morning now played on lands which they had never seen. And so they took the wings of the morning and set out for the West. And thus it came about that the morning, moving westward, across sea and land, drew men on and on and on until the entire globe had been girdled and the whole world won. The moon may draw the tides in her train; but the morning leads the nations on. Civilization has marched through the ages to the watchword of 'Westward Ho!' Man has always been hunting the morning.

It is getting darker now, and I can scarcely see to write. But as I watch the last faint tints die away from the leaden clouds about the mountain, I find it good to reflect that my sunset means some other's sunrise. The morning is over there, and somebody is revelling in its sweetness and saying that it is good to be alive. And here am I in the dusk. And so, all unsuspecting, I stumble upon something substitutionary, something vicarious, something like a sacrament, in these fading, flickering hues about the mountain's brow. I am plunging into darkness that some one else may enjoy the day. I am feeling it chilly and cold that some one else

may laugh in the glorious sunshine. I am about to lie down and abandon myself to sleep, Death's own twin sister, that some one else over there in the land of the morning may wake up and feel the rush and riot of new life surging tumultuously through every vein. If only I can manage to remember this, it will often cheer me in the darkness. Have I lost my beautiful morning? It is bathing some other face in sunshine. Is my day waning? Some other is waxing. The old leaves fall off only because the new buds are pushing their way through. 'I must decrease,' cried John the Baptist bravely, 'but He must increase!' And that fine philosophy, if only I can make it my own, will help me, even when my last sun sets, to greet the unseen with a cheer.

Yes, to greet the unseen with a cheer. For God is the God of the unseen, the unknown, the unexplored. *That* is what David saw in the sunset thirty centuries ago, although I am so gross that I fear I should never have noticed it. Follow the morning; and to whatever barren rock or coral reef or sylvan isle or spreading continent it may lead you, you will discover Jesus standing as of old upon the shore. 'If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even *there* shall Thy hand lead me.' What a comfort that has been to all our pioneers and pathfinders! There lies before me an ancient map of the world, which an

old pilot showed to King Henry VII in the year 1500. All over the unexplored territory I find written 'Here be dragons,' 'Here be demons,' 'Here be sirens,' 'Here be savages that worship devils,' and so on. But David wrote across the whole of the unexplored, '*Here is God!*' And David's version has proved, after all, to be very much nearer to the truth. I have had the great honour of holding two pastorates—one in New Zealand and one in Tasmania. In New Zealand no name is more honoured than that of Bishop Selwyn; in Tasmania none is more cherished than that of Sir John Franklin. Now here is a striking and impressive coincidence! When young Selwyn landed in New Zealand, that country was the land of the Maori, and the Maori had the reputation of being the most ferocious of cannibals. The youthful Bishop looked around upon a land of volcanic wonders and of the most unusual vegetation. When Sunday came, he conducted his very first service in the new land. Turning for a moment from the natives to his white companions, he exclaimed, 'A great change has taken place in the circumstances of our natural life; but no change which need affect our spiritual being. We have come to a land where not so much as a tree resembles those of our native country. All visible things are new and strange; but the things that are unseen remain the same.'

And he took as the text of that first sermon in New Zealand these very words: '*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me!*' He had found the land on which the sun shone after it had set in England; he had reached the land of his long-lost mornings; and he discovered to his delight that, whenever the morning broke on those strange scenes, Jesus invariably stood on the shore.

And now for Sir John Franklin! Sir Francis Leopold McClintock, away in Arctic seas, found a boat-load of bones, representing all that remained of Sir John Franklin and his gallant companions. And with the bones there were Bibles. And in one of those Bibles these same words were marked and underlined: '*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me.*' The wings of the morning took Selwyn to the far South, and the wings of the morning took Franklin to the far North, but whenever a morning broke on those new and strange horizons Jesus was in His old place. 'When the morning was come Jesus stood on the shore.' You may steer your craft to what land you will, but you will always find Him there.

I was reading the other day the *Life of Andrew Fuller*, by his son. One of the most affecting pages relates to the great man's prodigal son, Robert.

To the unspeakable grief of his father, Robert ran away to sea, and died off Lisbon in 1809. In a sermon preached on the Sunday after the receipt of the mournful news, the good man seemed to take great comfort from the words, 'If *from thence* thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him.' 'Some,' he said, 'are far from home, and have no friend in their dying moments to speak a word of comfort, but *He* is near. When Jonah was compassed about by the floods, when the billows and the waves passed over him, he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord heard him.' Here Mr. Fuller gave vent to his feelings, and many who knew his dark secret wept with him. Later and fuller intelligence proved that the father had been speaking almost prophetically, for, during his last days, Robert was known to all his shipmates as a sincere and devout Christian man. Robert had taken the wings of the morning and flown to the uttermost parts of the sea; but he saw the Saviour walking on the waves, and, whenever he drew near to land, Jesus stood on the shore.

One of these days I shall set out on my own great voyage of exploration. I shall see my last sun sinking, and shall set out for the land that is mantled with the flush of morning. I shall leave behind me all the old familiar things, and shall sail out into the unknown, the unseen, the unexplored.

I shall be surrounded on every hand by the wonders that here were beyond me, by the mysteries that here baffled my comprehension. I shall see strange sights and hear unwonted sounds. But it will be all right. For when I take the wings of the morning, and fly out into the uttermost of the uttermost, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me! In a little Cambridgeshire churchyard there stands a tombstone whose epitaph is more than a century old. It records the names of two aged sisters, and the text that follows their names is simply this: 'When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore!' And, really, it would be very difficult to find a passage more cheering or appropriate. But there is no tinge of gold in the scudding clouds now; it is too dark for writing; they are lighting the gas behind me; I must draw the blinds and go.

II

THE BLOODHOUND OF THE HEDGEROW

It was a typical morning in the early English summer. I had gone down from college on the Saturday night to preach in this charming rural hamlet on the Sunday. I discovered on arrival that only one service—that on Sunday evening—was required of me. After breakfast on Sunday morning, therefore, I took a book from my bag, and set out across the meadows. The fields were draped in all the bravery of their vernal glory; the hedgerows were ablaze with blossom; the atmosphere was laden with the fragrance of the wild flowers; the forest across the meadows was choral with its feathered minstrelsy; and the humming told me that the bees were busy. It seemed almost an impertinence to carry a book. Presently I came upon an enormous oak. It was not difficult to clamber up amongst its huge branches; and, sprawling on one giant limb, I took out my book and,

hidden from all the world by the leafy curtains about me, I began to read. For awhile I became absorbed in the volume in my hand. Then a little scream, as of a creature in distress, made me realize with a start that I was no longer alone. Glancing up, I saw, on a bough far above, a shy little squirrel looking curiously down at me; but the cry had not come from him. Below me on the grass were a dozen rabbits whose burrows were among the roots of the oak. They were sitting with ears erect, scenting danger. The cry had not come from them. But fifty yards farther away I saw another rabbit flying in terror from before some strange nut-brown creature that, with slow serpentine movement, stealthily followed it. It was a weasel. And the rabbit ran so much faster than the weasel that it puzzled me to imagine how so slow a creature could habitually make the fleeter animals his prey. Pursuer and pursued soon vanished in a bank of bluebells, and left me to my perplexity. But I have solved the problem now.

I was reading Richard Jefferies' *Gamekeeper at Home* yesterday. The genial naturalist has a page or two on 'The Bloodhound of the Hedgerow.' 'The thirst of the weasel for blood,' he says, 'is insatiable, and it is curious to watch the persistency with which he will hunt down the particular rabbit he has singled out for destruction. Through the

winding subterranean galleries of the burrows, with their cross-passages, blind-holes, and pop-holes, never once in the dark close caverns losing sight or scent of its victim, he pursues it with a species of eager patience. It is generally a long chase. The rabbit makes a dash ahead, and a double or two, and then halts, usually at the mouth of a hole, perhaps to breathe. The weasel follows, gliding up the bank with a motion not unlike that of a snake. Although the bank is tenanted by fifty other rabbits, past whose hiding-place the weasel must go, yet they scarcely take any notice. They remain quiet, as if perfectly aware that they are not yet marked out for slaughter.' And so the chase goes on, the weasel never allowing himself to be turned aside to pursue any other rabbit than the particular rabbit upon which he set his heart at the beginning. The poor bunny rushes in its distress from bank to bank, from field to field, and from hedgerow to hedgerow; but his pitiless little pursuer never loses the scent. Indeed, he is so oblivious to everything else that he will run between your legs if you stand astride the trail. Nothing will distract him. Slowly but surely on he comes, his wicked little eyes twinkling with cruel confidence and anticipation, his nose to the ground, and his appetite for the blood of his victim growing with the chase. 'The rabbit,' continues Richard

Jefferies, 'tired to death at last hides in the grass and the dry rushes; but across the meadow, stealing along the furrow, comes the weasel! and, shift his place how he may, in the end, worn out and weary, bunny succumbs, and the sharp teeth meet in the neck, behind the ear, severing the vein.' Here, then, I find, after twenty years, the solution of the problem that perplexed me on that glorious Sunday in the English fields. And in the solution I find food for thought on many Sunday mornings yet to come. For, whilst I feel very sorry for the rabbit, I cannot but admire the weasel. There is something very fine about his steadfast refusal to be distracted. He is on the scent of his chosen quarry, and no temptation or terror shall turn him aside. Neither the allurements of a nearer rabbit, nor the fear of a human intruder, will divert him from his first intention. When I come to think of it, I fancy that history can furnish me with some striking illustrations of the same phenomenon.

Emile Zola, for example, in *La Debacle*, tells us how, on the morning of the battle of Sedan, Captain Beaudoin's company were ordered to lie down in a large field of cabbages. Guns were booming, bullets were flying, shells were bursting, houses were burning. The men were restive and impatient to be in action. 'How long were they going to lie among the cabbages? Maurice turned his head, and was

greatly astonished on perceiving in the depths of a sequestered valley, sheltered by rugged slopes, a peasant who was calmly pursuing his avocation—guiding a plough drawn by a big white horse. Why should the man lose a day? Corn would not cease growing, the human race would not cease living, because a few thousand men happened to be fighting.' And, thirty pages farther on, Zola tells how, in the evening, when the great battle had been fought, and the morning seemed ages ago, Maurice was washing the wounds of his comrade. 'Suddenly he was greatly astonished when, on his right hand, in the depths of a secluded valley, sheltered by rugged slopes, he again espied the same peasant whom he had seen in the morning, and who was still leisurely turning up the sod, guiding his plough drawn by a big white horse. Why should a day be lost? Corn would not cease growing, nor would the human race cease living, simply because it pleased some men to fight!' Now here again we have the same principle at work. Like the weasel, the ploughman declines to be distracted, even by the drama of battle on all the surrounding hills. He finely finishes his furrow.

Nor can I resist the temptation to lay beside Richard Jefferies and his weasel, and Emile Zola and his ploughman, Carlyle's immortal story of David Hope. Good David Hope, as everybody

now knows, kept a little farm on the Solway shore. The harvest, in this particular year, was very late. Rain had come, and the corn lay sodden in the fields. Then followed a few days' drought, and the harvest was ready for leading in. 'Breakfast was soon over,' Carlyle tells us, with evident admiration and lingering fondness, 'and next in course came family worship, what they call taking the Book. David was putting on his spectacles, when somebody came rushing in. "Such a raging wind arisen as will drive the stooks into the sea if let alone." "Wind!" answered David. "Wind canna get ae straw that has been appointed mine! Sit down and let us worship God!"' Now here we have this great English naturalist with his weasel, this great French writer with his ploughman, and this great historian with his devout Scottish farmer, all teaching us in different ways the same lesson. And a very impressive lesson it is.

I fancy that the great classical examples in the history of the Church point in the same direction. I think of Daniel. 'Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.' '*As he did aforetime.*' That is to say, that the edict made no difference. He

refused to be turned aside. Like Jefferies' weasel in the English meadows, and like Zola's ploughman at Sedan, and like Carlyle's farmer by the Solway, he declined to be distracted. He went on his way. His programme knew no deviation.

From the life of Paul it would be easy to gather a score of incidents to the like effect. 'From henceforth *let no man distract me*!' he cries; and he allows himself to be neither coaxed nor cowed from the course marked out. I think of Luther, and the efforts made to turn him from his purpose of appearing before the Diet. 'I will go if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the housetops!' And Dr. Dale's historic criticism of Mr. Gladstone's projected retirement naturally comes to mind. Mr. Gladstone announced that he proposed to withdraw from the hurly-burly of political conflict, and to prepare his mind by quiet meditation for the great change that could not be far off. Dr. Dale thought that Mr. Gladstone was allowing the prospect of death to needlessly distract him. 'I believe,' said Dr. Dale, 'that it is well for the closing years of life to find us doing the work for which God has given us the faculty and opportunity. If Mr. Gladstone knew that within five minutes of the hour at which he expected to close one of his great speeches his pulse would cease to beat, I think that he should deliver his speech without omitting a single

necessary sentence or syllable. I believe that to a Christian man who has received through Christ the pardon of sins and the gift of eternal life the discharge of common duty is a great part of the preparation for the glorious transition from this world to the next.' Dr. Dale's reasoning reminds us of the famous scene in the Old Parliament House at Connecticut, when the sudden darkness seemed to some of the members to foreshadow the approaching end of the world. It was suggested that the House should adjourn. And then, as Whittier tells us,

> All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport.
> He rose, slow, cleaving with his steady voice
> The intolerable hush. 'This well may be
> The Day of Judgement which the world awaits;
> But, be it so, or not, I only know
> My present duty, and my Lord's command,
> To occupy till He come. So at the post
> Where He hath set me in His providence,
> I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face.
> . . . . . .
> Bring in the candles.'

But the great point about Richard Jefferies' weasel —the point from which, in writing on distraction, I must be careful not to be myself distracted—is the fidelity of the weasel to the individual trail. The weasel might have wasted his whole day, and starved at night, if he had allowed himself to chase one rabbit a little way and then gone

off after another, and so on. The weasel made up his mind in the morning to chase a particular rabbit, and, although the rabbit was faster than he, he found his teeth in that rabbit's neck before night simply by reason of the persistence with which he stuck to that one trail. We sadly need that reminder in our Church life to-day. The fact is that we stand possessed of an opportunity of which the early Church never dared to dream. We are able to hold, for example, evangelistic services on Sunday evenings. If you had described a motor-car, a submarine, a biplane, or a wireless telegram to a Christian of the second century, he would have smiled incredulously But if you had told him that, in the age that should look upon these marvels of ingenuity, the Church would be able to reach the world by means of services held within her own buildings, he would have thrown up his hands in blank amazement. For the Church of his time was hunted and harassed by cruel persecution. Her services were held in secret. Her sanctuaries were places of peril. The only persons present, therefore, were devout believers. The only objects sought were, firstly, worship ; and secondly, instruction. 'We come together,' writes one of those pioneers and pathfinders of the faith, 'to recollect the Divine Scriptures ; we nourish our faith, raise our hope, and confirm our trust by the Sacred Word.' An evangelistic address would have been strangely

out of place. In view of all this, I have not exaggerated, therefore, in depicting the utter astonishment with which an early Christian would have heard of our modern opportunity. But, having recovered from the first shock of his surprise, he would have warned us in earnest tones and grave. 'See to it,' he would have entreated, 'oh, see to it that you regard your later opportunity of public evangelism as a *supplement to*, and not as a *substitute for*, our early method of private evangelism!' For that early Church, despite the select character of its assemblies, was nevertheless a passionately evangelistic Church. Its members rejoiced, and its persecutors complained, that its teachings spread like wild-fire. 'We are but of yesterday,' wrote Tertullian, 'yet we have filled your cities, islands, towns, and boroughs; we are in the camp, the Senate, and the Forum. Our foes lament that every sex, age, and condition, and persons of every rank, are converts to the name of Christ.' And in three centuries the Roman Empire itself capitulated unconditionally to the triumphant Church! The Church had conquered the world, not through the attendance of the world at her services, not even by her public witness outside of her Church walls, but by the private influence of her members over those with whom, during the week, they came in contact. She brought the

nations to her feet, not by public evangelism, but by an exquisitely beautiful representation, in private conduct, commerce, and conversation, of the merciful and majestic teachings of her Divine Lord. The individual captured the individual. Here, then, is the principle of the weasel at work on a really splendid scale. We all remember how Loyola won his brilliant pupil, Francis Xavier, by sticking to his man, and never resting till his man was won. We all remember how Bilney set his heart on winning Hugh Latimer, and thus lit a candle in England that has never been put out. I am glad that I saw the weasel through the leafy curtains of my gnarled old oak that lovely Sunday morning. It has taught me much, and its lesson, if I apply it, may carry me far.

III

THE GOLDEN MILESTONE

I HAVE it in my heart to say a kind word for chimney-pots. It ought, of course, to be penned in poetry, and then set to music; but I know my limitations. There is, however, a charming little poem by Longfellow on the chimney-pots:

Each man's chimney is his Golden Milestone,
Is the central point from which he measures every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.

Chimney-pots are such lovable things, perhaps the most lovable of all inanimate things. I see that four pounds of gold were awhile ago collected from the soot of the chimneys of the Royal Mint at Berlin. I am not at all surprised. I fancy that there is more gold clinging to the chimneys than we usually suspect. I confess without shame to a certain amount of sympathy with a poor fellow with whom Michael Fairless

has made us familiar. 'Once, years ago,' she says, 'I sat by the bedside of a dying man in a wretched garret in the East End of London. He was entirely ignorant, entirely quiescent, and entirely uninterested. The minister of a neighbouring church came to see him, and spoke to him at some length of the need for repentance and the joys of heaven. After he had gone my friend lay staring restlessly at the mass of decrepit chimney-pots which made his horizon. At last he spoke, and there was a new note in his voice:

"'Ee said as 'ow there were golding streets in them parts. I ain't no ways particular wot they're made of, but it'll feel nat'ral like if there's *chimleys* too!"'

'The sun,' Michael Fairless continues, 'stretched a sudden finger, and painted the chimney-pots red and gold against the smoke-dimmed sky, and with his face alight with surprised relief my friend died.'

That strikes me as being very human, and, every way, very fine.

Everything about the chimney is entrancing. I was visiting not long ago an old house in which the quaint old chimney-corner survived! What times our grandfathers had in the chimney-corner! I really believe that the British Empire was made in a chimney-corner. In those quiet old days, before

newspapers and railway trains and telegrams had been dreamed of, the chimney-corner was the most potent spot in England. There, when the hard day's work was finished, neighbours met and grappled with the problems of Church and State in really splendid fashion. None of your gossip, and chatter, and funny stories! The chimney-corner was as solemn as a senate; and many a budding village Hampden, listening open-eyed to the furious debate that took place there, imbibed principles that afterwards prompted him to write his name in glowing capitals on the scroll of national fame. And the domestic influence of the chimney-corner was worth something. For it was not every night that the neighbours dropped in. And in those days of few meetings, the long hours in which the parents occupied the corner-seats, whilst the children gathered fondly round, cultivated a domestic atmosphere that has been worth to the nation more than any tongue can tell. I raise my hat respectfully to the memory of the chimney-corner.

And, as a natural means of connexion between the chimney-corner and the chimney-pots, what about the chimney-sweep? Who can forget the opening of Kingsley's *Water-babies*? 'Once upon a time there was a little chimney-sweep, and his name was Tom. He cried half his time and he laughed half his time.' He had plenty to cry about in all conscience. And

it is to his honour that he got some fun out of his life as well. But that sentence always seems to me so exquisitely characteristic. For I myself never know whether to laugh or cry when I think of the poor little chimney-sweeps. Charles Lamb felt inclined to laugh. 'I like to meet a sweep,' he tells us in his *Essays of Elia*. 'I have a kindly yearning towards these dim specks—poor blots—innocent blacknesses. I reverence these young Africans of our own growth —these almost clergy imps, who sport their cloth without assumption; and from their little pulpits, the chimney-tops, preach, in the nipping air of a winter's morning, a lesson of patience to mankind. When a child, what a mysterious pleasure it was to witness the operation! to see a chit no bigger than oneself enter, one knew not by what process, into what seemed the *fauces Averni*—to pursue him in imagination, as he went sounding on through so many dark, stifling caverns, to shudder with the idea that "now surely, he must be lost for ever" —to revive on hearing his feeble shout of discovered daylight—and then—oh, fullness of delight!— running out of doors, to come just in time to see the sable phenomenon emerge in safety, the brandished weapon of his art victorious, like some flag waved over a conquered citadel!'

Poor little chimney-sweep! He has vanished like the chimney-corner. And for his loss we have no

tears to shed. For, as Kingsley says, he was himself half a tear as well as half a smile. It is a pathetic memory. 'The story of the sufferings of the chimney-sweep,' says Mr. Hodder, 'reads like a chapter from some terrible record of the Dark Ages.' Mr. Hodder proceeds to a very ugly paragraph in which he describes the horrors of 'sweeper's cancer' and other tortures induced by their grimy vocation. 'I do not believe,' exclaimed Lord Shaftesbury, the champion of the chimney-sweeps, 'I do not believe that all the records of all the atrocities committed in this country, or in any other, could equal the records of cruelty, hardship, vice, and suffering which has been inflicted on these hapless and miserable boys!' Just as Charles Lamb was born, Jonas Hanway, a colleague of Robert Raikes, inaugurated the campaign against the employment of chimney-sweeps. When Charles Lamb was old enough to write the essay from which I have quoted, it was made illegal to send a boy up a chimney *when that chimney was on fire*! And, less than forty years ago, the centenary of the opening of the campaign was celebrated by the passing, in 1875, of the Chimney-sweepers Bill. 'Lord Shaftesbury,' it was announced, 'has broken the fetters of the most oppressed, degraded, and tortured children on the face of the earth!' It is good to know that the gospel of Christ cleansed even the chimney-pots from

everything about them that was debasing and unworthy.

Not that chimney-sweeps were the only creatures that ever negotiated the fearsome passage from the chimney-top to the chimney-corner. By no means. I have known starlings to forget themselves and come fluttering down the sooty passage. Robins, too, often make the same mistake. And once I remember finding a swallow beating itself to pieces against the window-pane. Poor, ruffled, frightened little wanderers! It must have seemed to them as though they had fallen into the crater of a recently extinct and still warm volcano, and had found a way into a strange and mysterious subterranean under-world. Quite a touch of pretty pathos these fluttering, palpitating things give to our prosaic chimney-tops. Then, too, my chimney often converts itself into a kind of telephone-tube, and, sitting in the arm-chair here, I listen to the twitter of the sparrows and the chatter of the starlings on the pots above.

But I have been too long dealing with the chimney analytically. And that is not the best way of treating anything. You do not see the beauty of a flower by examining it, petal by petal, under a microscope. And you do not see the beauty of the chimney by taking it to pieces, as we have been doing, and inspecting first the chimney-corner,

then the chimney-pot, and so on. The chimney is a whole; and, considered as a whole, the chimney is very admirable. Regarded from a purely architectural point of view, it seems to me impossible to exaggerate the importance of the chimney. 'Old-fashioned cottages,' says Richard Jefferies, 'are practically built around the chimney; the chimney is the firm nucleus of solid masonry or brickwork about which the low walls of rubble are clustered. When such a cottage is destroyed, the chimney nearly always remains, and against the chimney it is built up again.' Surely nobody who has once visited the scene of a recent fire can ever again speak in terms of disrespect of the chimney! Everything else is a heap of charred and smouldering ruins. The twisted leg of an iron bedstead, and the battered remnants of a kitchen stove, peep piteously out from the general wreckage. But the chimney stands serene and unaffected, as though it had not even heard that a fire had occurred in the vicinity. It is the natural emblem of constancy, of fidelity, of the friendship that holds its own when all else goes to ruin. It is the emblem of the things that abide—the things over which the storm and fire and tempest have no power. We remember Gibbon's striking sentence about the lonely pillar on the site of the ancient city of Philadelphia; and we go into

deliriums of ecstasy over the stately ruins of Athens and of Rome. But how shall we defend our own consistency if, admiring so rapturously these majestic monuments that have successfully defied the anarchisms of history and the teeth of time, we gaze scornfully upon the solitary chimney-stack that stands unshaken amidst a smoking wilderness of ashes? 'The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.' We must not treat things contemptuously simply because they are homely and near at hand. Chivalry may lurk in cottages as well as in courts. Heroism may display itself in kitchens as well as in campaigns.

But it is never of much use prating about consistency. We are only consistent in our consistent inconsistency—at any rate where chimneys are concerned. For what of the man who invented chimneys? We are never tired of singing the praises of Benjamin Franklin for inventing the lightning-rod which brings the venom of the angry skies down the outside of the chimney into the ground. And all honour to him! But what of the man who devised a way of taking the fumes of the fire and the suffocating smoke up the inside of the chimney to the open air above? I can fancy myself living, and finding pleasure in life, before lightning-rods were invented. But fancy living before chimneys came in! Old Raphael Holinshed,

the quaint Elizabethan chronicler, tell us that, in his father's time, 'there was scarcely a house with a chimney in it, even in considerable towns; the fire was kindled by the wall, and the smoke sought its way out at the roof, the door, or the windows.' The picture is not attractive. They can sing about the good old times who care. I prefer to live in the days of the chimney-pots. It is good to have some way of quickly carrying off the smoke. I shall try to remember that when next I am inclined to lose my temper. A certain proverb sees some remarkable resemblance between a scolding wife and a smoking chimney; but, personally, I have never been able to see why the element of sex was introduced.

In the *Water-babies*, Kingsley turns the chimney-pots into evangelists. We remember how, at the end, wicked old Mr. Grimes, who used to beat and starve poor little Tom, the chimney-sweep, is condemned to be stuck fast in a chimney-pot himself. The poor old fellow begins to cry most piteously.

'"Oh dear," he says, "if I was but a little chap again! How different I would go on! But it is too late now! I've made my bed and I must lie on it!! Foul I would be and foul I am! It's my own fault; but it's too late, too late!"

'"Never too late!" said the fairy, in a strange soft voice.

'Nor was it too late. For as poor Grimes wept, his own tears did what his mother's could not do, and what Tom's could not do, and what nobody's on earth could do for him; for they washed the soot off his face and off his clothes; and then they washed the mortar away from beneath the bricks; and the chimney crumbled down, and Grimes got out of it!'

Charles Lamb spoke of the chimney-pots as pulpits from which the black little clergy preached patience; but here they are themselves preachers, preaching of the cleansing, delivering virtue of the penitent's tears! Whether they preach of patience or of penitence, chimney-pots are wonderfully eloquent preachers.

Oh, those chimney-pots! Is there a city minister in the world that is not sometimes haunted by the vision of that forest of chimneys? Who that has entered London, or Glasgow, or Melbourne, or Sydney, or any of our great cities, by train, has not been overwhelmed by the thousands and thousands of chimneys? It rushes back upon one even in his sleep—that interminable vision of chimney-pots! We recall Robert Murray McCheyne's emotions on accompanying a city missionary through some of the slums of Edinburgh. 'Such scenes,' he says, 'I never before dreamed of! Why am I such a stranger to the poor of my

native town? I have passed their doors thousands of times. I have admired the huge black piles of buildings, with their lofty chimneys breaking the sun's rays. Why have I never ventured within? How dwelleth the love of God in me? How cordial is the welcome even of the poorest and most loathsome to the voice of Christian sympathy! What embedded masses of human beings are huddled together unvisited by friend or minister! "No man careth for our souls" is written over every forehead. Awake, my soul!'

And so I discover something very terrible about these murky, smoky, grimy chimney-pots. 'The sun,' said Michael Fairless, 'stretched a sudden finger, and painted the chimney-pots red and gold against the smoke-dimmed sky.' And, in that roseate sunset glow, this countless army of chimney-pots looks to me like myriads and myriads of spires, all pointing mutely upwards, reaching pathetically skywards, gazing pitifully from the squalor below to the stainless purity above. They seem to be struggling to attract the attention of the heavens beyond to the dwellers in the homes beneath, and to point the dwellers in those homes below to the things beyond the stars. They seem to know that, whilst they can carry off something of the smoke that is generated underneath, true happiness can visit the lives over which they have mounted sentinel

only just so far as those lives are enriched by the grace and favour of heaven itself. The myriad chimney-pots look to me like myriad fingers all pointing to the skies. Wise chimney-pots!

IV

OUR TRYSTING-PLACES

We shall never forget them—those dear old trysting-places. The rustic bridge over the trout-stream; the gnarled oak where the lane forked; the leafy spot in the forest where the bridle-paths crossed; the crazy stile across the sunlit meadows; and, later on, the familiar spots in the crowded city at which we met by appointment. Our trysts occupy a large place in life, and a large place in literature. I think of one shining example which may serve as the representative of many.

It is an idyll of the desert. Scanning the arid waste, a solitary watcher descries a cloud of dust on the far horizon. He shades his eyes with his hand, and looks more closely. Order evolves from confusion. Out from the cloud of dust a caravan emerges. There are camels heavily laden, and merchantmen directing the progress of the stately

and picturesque procession. As the camels draw nearer, the lonely watcher sees the leading merchantman gaze carefully and thoughtfully at the sun. Then he gives instructions to his followers ; they in their turn slacken the pace of the meek-eyed camels ; and the caravan moves with slow and steady steps towards a massive rock that stands out boldly in the centre of the plain. But the watcher's attention has been so absorbed by all this that he has failed to notice another cloud of dust in another direction. But now he observes with a start a second caravan approaching. Its leader also gazes thoughtfully skywards. Then he, too, issues instructions. The pace of his camels is accelerated. The tired but patient beasts are hurried towards the great boulder, which the two caravans reach at length almost simultaneously. The merchantmen exchange greetings, join forces with each other, re-form the united caravan, and all go off across the desert together. All this the lonely witness closely watches. Then he says to himself, ' That was no chance ! It was no haphazard meeting ! They had made an appointment ! They had trysted ! *Can two walk together except they had agreed ?* ' Is it not written in the book of the Prophet Amos ?

Now this matter of trysting is a very interesting and a very beautiful one. The longer we live,

the more we feel with Amos that there is no room for chance in a world like this. The universe is under control. There is a hand on the helm. We do not drift. And, if this be so in very deed, then our meetings with each other are like the meetings of the caravans. They are so arranged. We meet in fulfilment of a plan. We are keeping a tryst. The tryst may be a conscious one, as in the cases of the leaders of the caravans. Or it may be unconscious, as in the cases of the followers who are not in their leader's confidence, and who know nothing of his plans. But whether conscious or unconscious, it is part of the programme. No two men ever yet passed each other on the street by chance. We spend our lives in keeping appointments.

What a wonderful drama is unfolded to us in the story of Peter and Cornelius! In all the fairy-tales of fiction there is nothing to approach it. Novelists have told us of extraordinary meetings at extraordinary moments, but no novelist has ever told a story like this. Here are two men being secretly impelled towards each other, with the destinies of continents hanging on their meeting. The history of the world entered upon a fresh phase as they met. The two men were resistlessly thrown into each other's arms in fulfilment of a tryst of which neither was aware, and in the

very teeth of all their ingrained racial piques and prejudices. And when they clasped hands, then, for the first time in history, Jews and Gentiles were all one in Christ Jesus. As Peter journeyed that day along the sea-shore from his own lodging at Joppa to Cornelius at Caesarea, the tossing waves were witnessing a romance of nations. A thing was happening that would pour the stream of empire into new channels. The history of the world was being overhauled and recast. Yet neither of these men knew that they were but pawns upon a board, puppets of a higher will, carrying into fruition and fulfilment the struggling purposes of countless ages.

No; there are no chance meetings. We keep tryst. It was not by chance that the merchantmen met in the desert. It was not by chance that David and Jonathan met in the open field. It was not by chance that Elijah and Ahab met on the grassy slopes of Carmel. It was not by chance that Herod and John met on the highways of Galilee. It was not by chance that Pilate and Jesus met in the judgement hall at Jerusalem. It was not by chance that Peter and Cornelius met on the Syrian sea-board. It was not by chance that Philip and the Ethiopian met on the sandy road to Gaza. It was not by chance that Nero and Paul met amidst the antique splendours of ancient Rome.

It was not by chance that Savonarola met Lorenzo, or that John Knox met Queen Mary, or that Hugh Latimer met Henry the Eighth. It was not by chance that, at the crisis of his spiritual anguish, Martin Luther met John Staupitz. It was not by chance that John Bunyan met with the three poor women sitting in the sun. It was not by chance that young Spurgeon met the local preacher that snowy morning at Artillery Street Chapel at Colchester. No, no; our meetings are no more by chance than the meeting of Stanley and Livingstone in Central Africa. 'It is the strange truth of life,' says Stopford Brooke, 'that unknowingly we are continually hovering close to our destiny. We think again and again, in the street, at night before sleep attacks us with her envious silence, that perhaps to-day we met, or perhaps to-morrow we shall meet, him or her who will upturn our life and make it new.'

Think of our *courtships*, for example. Is it not Mr. G. K. Chesterton who says that the spectacle of a pair of lovers wandering in a leafy lane is a greater slice of history than the record of a battle? For the battle is a grim story of the past; whilst, as you gaze upon that happy man and maid, you look down the long avenues of future generations. Can any one believe that our courtships come about by chance? If so, our homes are the temples of

chance, our children are the offspring of chance, the race is the creation of chance, and we have expelled God from His own universe.

'Meeting by accident!' Mark Rutherford exclaims in *Catherine Furze*. 'Why, my friend Reuben told me the other day that his marriage was an accident! The more I think about accidents, the less do I believe in them! By chance he had an invitation to go to Shott Woods one afternoon, and there he saw the girl who afterwards became his wife and the mother of children with a certain stamp upon them. They in turn will have other children, all of them moulded after a fashion which would have been different if his wife had been another woman. Nay, *these* children would not have existed if this particular marriage had not taken place. Thus the whole course of history is altered, because of that little note and a casual encounter. We are brought together by a law as unavoidable as gravity.' Yes; that pair of lovers met by appointment, not only in the leafy lane last night, but when first they saw each other's faces, and felt a tingling consciousness that their destiny had saluted them. Edwin Arnold sings:

> Somewhere there waiteth in this world of ours
> For each lone soul another lonely soul,
> Each chasing each through all the weary hours
> And meeting strangely at some sudden goal

Then blend they, like green leaves with golden flowers,
Into one beautiful and perfect whole;
And life's long night is ended, and the way
Lies open, onward to eternal day.

'A woman cannot find rest,' says Dr. Alexander Whyte, 'but in the house of her husband. Knit as her heart is, and will for ever be, to her father and to her mother, yet there is a soul somewhere in God's hand to whom she was knit before she was born, and when God opens His hand twin-soul leaps out to meet twin-soul, and she is married in the Lord.' It is the old story of the merchantmen in the desert. These two met together because they had an appointment.

We spend our lives in keeping trysts of which we ourselves are unaware until we look back in happy retrospect. We follow blindly, like the camels in the caravan, only feeling that there is a guiding hand. Our friendships, our partnerships, our associations, all answer to the same wonderful law. It governs our churches, and explains the sweetness of their fellowship. For what is the joy of a communion service but the spiritual rapture of trysting souls? There is no rendezvous of friend or lover so charming as this. Let me repeat a couple of stories. They illustrate my argument like a pair of pictures. The first is told by the Rev. James Strahan, M.A., of Edinburgh. 'The minister of a

seaport town,' he says, 'was recently struck by the appearance, at his week-night meeting, of a stranger with the air of a foreigner, who seemed to be thoroughly entering into the spirit of the whole service. At the close, when the others had gone, the stranger waited to exchange greetings with the minister, who found to his astonishment that he did not know a single word of English. He was a Norseman who had stepped ashore for a day, and had somehow been led into that gathering of Christian folk. For a time the two men could only converse in dumb signs, till at length the stranger uttered two words which are the same in his Norse language as in our own English. The words were —JESUS CHRIST. There the two men were, with their different languages, their different nationalities, their different Churches—everything apparently different. Yet there was no difference, because they had one faith. There is no freemasonry to compare with that!' We do well to sing:

> **How sweet the name of Jesus sounds**
> **In a believer's ear!**

And we do well to reflect as we sing it that that matchless Name is the greatest and most delightful trysting-place in any of God's wonderful worlds.

The second story is told by the Rev. J. D. Jones,

of Bournemouth. Mr. Jones speaks of an old English villager who went up to London, and visited one of our great picture-galleries. Presently he came upon a wonderful painting of the Crucifixion. As he gazed upon it, his whole soul caught fire. Tears came to his eyes. 'Bless Him!' he exclaimed aloud; 'I love Him! I love Him!' Others in the gallery looked on at first with startled curiosity, and then with profound emotion. A stranger approached the countryman, and, grasping his hand, exclaimed, 'And so do I!' A third came up, 'And so do I!' And then a fourth, until there stood, before the picture of the Cross, a little knot of men, perfect strangers to each other, whose souls had kept tryst in the love of Christ.

And surely it is the fond conviction that, in the heaven that awaits us, we have a tryst to keep that lends sweetness and stateliness to many of our most prosaic and commonplace experiences. On his way to keep his tryst a lover makes sport of apparently insuperable obstacles. Mr. Lauchlin Maclean Watt, in his volume of small poems, has put this for us very tenderly:

Oh the way sometimes is low,
  And the waters dark and deep,
And I stumble as I go.
  But I have a tryst to keep;
It was plighted long ago
  With some who lie asleep.

And though days go dragging slow,
And the sad hours gravewards creep,
And the world is hushed in woe,
I neither wail nor weep,
For He would not have it so,
And I have a tryst to keep.

The keeping of our trysts is the main business of this life, and it will be the supreme fascination of the next.

V

THE GLORY ON THE DOORSTEP

Of all the services in which one occasionally takes part, none affect one quite as deeply as the ordination of a young minister. I remember hearing Dr. Herber Evans, some years ago, speak of the emotions produced by such gatherings. Dr. Evans was, of course, Principal of his college, and he spoke of the weariness that overtook him at the end of the long session. 'But,' he went on, 'I must then go to the ordination services of the students, so as to start them heartily in their several spheres. And it is a new and strange experience to leave a young man anxious in a new neighbourhood, in the midst of strangers, to labour in the great work. The anxiety of every young minister becomes visible in his answers to the questions on the day of his ordination; and as a rule his references to his early days and his parents and their influence is certain to touch the feelings of the preacher and

his hearers. And it is healthy for them to weep together at the commencement. It is joyous weeping that morning—the weeping of June showers, with sunshine in every tear. There is neither pain nor wrong yet. But I have often tried to imagine, in looking over a congregation, who of these will first cause pain to the young minister? Who will draw the first tears from his eyes? Very often the warmest of his friends becomes cool, and the more the young minister makes of him, the more unamiable he becomes. Every one ought to remember how new it is for a young man to be the minister of a church or congregation. It is so easy for him to misunderstand any man or woman, and an unfair advantage is taken of what he said or did thoughtlessly. This is repeated, and a commotion follows; and in trying to undo what is done things become worse, and disagreement and quarrel in the church are created. All this would be impossible if every one considered that the young man is yet very inexperienced, and calls not for condemnation, but sympathy. It is through many mistakes that every one becomes master of his work.'

This is a fine illustration of the gentleness that makes men great, and it is a reflection of a still higher solicitude. They were tense moments in the life of Jesus when He gathered His first ministers about Him, and addressed them in words of exquisite

tenderness and yearning anxiety. I find myself attracted just now by that great word with which He first dismissed them as they turned their faces towards their life-work. He sent them forth two by two, and to each pair He gave this great and solemn charge: '*Eat such things as are set before you; heal the sick; and say unto them, The Kingdom of God has come to the door.*' That great threefold word I would echo, if I could, in the ears of all who have heard the voice that calls them to the raptures and responsibilities of the Christian ministry.

I

Jesus pictures His minister at table, and shows that he is called to a great SOCIAL ministry. '*Eat,*' He says, '*such things as are set before you.*' That is extremely important. You can see at a glance what Jesus meant. His men are not to be recluses, monks, anchorites. They are to get into the homes of the people; they are to sit down at the tables of the people; they are to eat the food of the people; they are to talk the talk of the people; they are to live the lives of the people. 'Eat such things as are set before you.' Take the people, that is to say, as you find them. Don't expect too much of them; and don't pretend to be superior to them. They are very human—food-eaters all of them.

And you are very human—a food-eater too. Sit down beside them, then, in a frank recognition of a common humanness. They don't crawl among the clods, and you don't dwell among the clouds. Let there be no nonsense, no affectation, no fine superior airs. Make the people feel that a man has come among them. And teach your heart to feel that every weed and waster in your district is a man—a man for whom Christ died. Be in a hurry to get *en rapport* with your people, and to make them feel that you are a man in the midst of men. 'Eat such things as are set before you.' I remember once, and only once, hearing Mr. Egerton Young, the apostle of the North American Indians. He told us that night of his first entrance among the wild people of a certain Indian tribe. The braves greeted the pale-face with the most cordial salutations of welcome. And then they gave a great feast in his honour. The Indians—in feathers, and belts, and leggings, and moccasins, and warpaint—squatted round in a circle, giving the missionary a place among them. Then the feast began. A huge haunch of venison was brought and handed, steaming, to the chief. He took it with his immense brown hands, lifted it to his mouth, tore a shred of meat from it with his teeth, and passed the joint to the brave sitting next. He did likewise, and so it was handed from one pair of grimy, greasy hands

to another, each man burying his face for a moment in the savoury meat, until at last it reached the astonished missionary. Mr. Young told us that when the remains of the haunch reached him, his stomach turned at the idea of gnawing at the bone that the redmen had left. But he saw that to refuse was to abandon all hope of ever winning them. And so, for the sake of Christ and His gospel, he gulped down all squeamishness, and pressed the morsel to his lips. He 'ate such things as were set before him,' and he won his way into the hearts of his untamed tribesmen by doing so. That is very fine.

And, after all, it is a minister's only chance. He must become all things to all men. He must learn to be equally and delightfully at home in the bushman's lonely humpy, in the kitchen of a cottager, and in the drawing-room at the castle. He will come to be loved and honoured and welcomed as a man—every inch of him; and, when he is dead, men will inscribe upon his tombstone, not 'HERE LIES A GREAT DIVINE,' but 'HERE LIES A GREAT HUMAN.' Of the ministers who fail, one here and there may fail because he is not sufficiently *divine*; but the great mass of us fail because we are not sufficiently *human*. There is nothing more wonderful in this universe of wonders than the willingness of people to forgive the faults of ministers. The

average congregation will forgive its minister almost anything. But there is one sin that is unpardonable. They will never forgive him if he be unmanly or non-human. And there is no reason why they should. 'Eat such things as are set before you.' That was the first word that Jesus said to His first ministers; and it is of really first-class importance. We must never, in all our forgettings, forget that.

II

Jesus pictures His minister at the bedside, and shows that he is called to a great SYMPATHETIC ministry. '*Heal the sick*,' He says. And that, too, is vastly important. We may not be able to lay our hands upon our poor sick folk and raise them, all aflush with health, from their beds of pain. It is not intended that we should. The early Church had special gifts for special purposes. She had to present her credentials. To-day she stands duly accredited. Moreover, there is this to be considered: the Church has produced the medical profession, and there is therefore no further need for her ministers to exercise special gifts of healing. The wonder of the world's beginning was that out from the side of man God took the woman, and those two made a perfect pair. God is always

working in that way. And, in later days, out from the side of the minister He took the doctor, and those two also made a perfect pair. Those first ministers went forth two by two. And they went forth two by two to do two things—to preach and to heal. And for awhile each of the twain preached, and each of the twain healed. Then they agreed to specialize. 'I will devote all my time and energy to the art of preaching!' said the one. 'And I will consecrate all my power and skill to the science of healing!' replied the other. And in course of time the first of those two disciples came to be called 'the Minister.' And the second of those two disciples came to be called 'the Doctor.' The Church has perpetuated her ancient gift of healing by creating the medical profession as we now know it. But that does not by any means dispose of this second great word of command. There are drops of healing virtue that distil from compassionate glances and from sympathetic words. We must never lose a chance of being in the house of trouble, by the bed of sickness, or in the valley of tears. We may not be able to help or to heal; but our very presence will mean a great deal. I read the other day of a little fellow who, one Saturday morning, burst into his father's study and showed a blister on his hand. He had burned his finger. 'Run away, sonnie,' the minister said, rather

abruptly. 'You see I'm busy; it's Saturday; and I can't help you.' 'Well, daddy,' the little fellow painfully remonstrated, 'you might have said "*Oh!*" anyhow!' There is a good deal in that. 'Heal the sick!' Jesus says. 'But I can't!' you answer. Well, go and say '*Oh!*' anyhow. And that sympathetic monosyllable, uttered with all the accent of sincerity and compassion, shall make your presence like the presence of your Lord.

III

Jesus pictures His minister on the doorstep, and shows that he is called to a great SPIRITUAL ministry. '*Say unto them,*' He says, '*that the Kingdom of God has come to the door.*' And in the pronouncement of that sovereign word the minister rises to the height of his glory. At the table he is a little *less* than his people. They are his host and hostess; he is their guest and accepts their hospitality. At the bedside he is on *an equality* with his people. He sits beside them; shares their sorrows and their sufferings. But here he rises *above* his people. He is *supreme*. He is herald and prophet and ambassador all in one. 'Say unto them, The Kingdom of God has come to the door!' Jesus knew the trouble that we poor, halting, stammering ministers would have to switch the conversation at the table, and

even by the bedside, on to the highest things And so He told us exactly what to say. 'Go in,' He said, 'eat such things as are set before you, and then, when you have eaten with them, and talked with them, and laughed with them, and perhaps wept with them, say unto them, "*The Kingdom of God has come to the door!*"' That is very fine; and we ministers might literally obey it with enormous profit. Mrs. Oliphant has told us how Edward Irving, when he was assistant to Dr. Chalmers, used to visit among the slums of the Gallowgate in Glasgow. He entered every home with the salutation, '*Peace be to this house!*' He might have been entering a Persian palace or a desert tent. 'A certain solemn atmosphere,' Mrs. Oliphant tells us, 'entered with that lofty figure, speaking in matchless harmony of voice its "Peace be to this house!" To be prayed for, sometimes edifyingly, sometimes tediously, was not uncommon to the Glasgow poor; but to be blessed was a novelty to them.'

I am not sure that we cannot improve upon even so excellent and beautiful a precedent. Say unto them, 'The Kingdom of God is come to the door!' And as you walk about the quiet roads and lanes of your new district with that thought singing itself into your soul, your whole being will thrill with the joy of it. You will knock at this door, and at that,

and you will not only send in your card, or say that the minister has come to the door, but you will be able to tell them that all heaven has come to the door! It was said of Mozart that his melodies brought the angels down, and of Beethoven that he lifted mortals up; but they will say both of you. 'The Kingdom of heaven has come to the door!' you will say; and you will feel that all the glory of the better world escorts you as you move from doorstep to doorstep.

And yet, whilst your heart dances with the glory of it, your soul will be crushed by the humiliation of it. For that is all that you can say: 'The Kingdom of God has come *to the door*!' That is as far as you will get the Kingdom of God in many cases. The door will open, and *you* will be asked in; but the Kingdom of God will be left at the door. They will not ask *it* in. And you will be unable to force it in. And you will sit down in that home, and you will 'eat such things as they set before you,' and you will talk their talk, and play with their children, and you will feel that you yourself would give your hope of eternity if only you could bring the Kingdom of God into that home, and present it to that hard-working father, and to that busy mother, and to those sweet children. But with all your praying and pleading, and hoping and yearning, you will not do it. 'The Kingdom of God has come

to the door!' you will say—'to the door! *to the door!* TO THE DOOR!' And the thing that will break your heart in the Christian ministry, and give you many, many sleepless nights, and pillows drenched with tears, is the fact that whilst you were able to take all heaven to every doorstep on which you stood, there were so few—so very few—houses in which you could get it any farther.

Still, that is not our affair. Only let us see to it that we 'eat such things as are set before us; and heal the sick; and say, The Kingdom of God is come to the door!' And we must leave the rest, as far as it is possible for earnest men to leave it, until the day of judgement. And then the very stones of the doorsteps on which we stood, and to which we brought the glory of heaven, will witness against those still stonier hearts. A good minister of Jesus Christ will give every doorstep in his district something to talk of in the day of judgement.

And, in any case, there are some homes into which the Kingdom of God *has* entered, and there are others into which we ourselves will take it. And those glorified homes into which the Kingdom of God enters will become miniature heavens themselves. And as in heaven there is joy and praise and adoration, so in those homes, radiant with the newly admitted Kingdom of God, there will be joy and praise and worship. And in that worship, at those

beautiful family altars, we shall not be forgotten. Be sure of that: we shall not be forgotten. Was it not our happy ministries that first brought the Kingdom of God to those hearts and hearths? Did not we lay the foundation-stone of those dear family altars? Oh, yes; be sure we shall not be forgotten there! There are few things that make a minister's heart more tender than the thought that he is loved and trusted and prayed for in homes to whose doorstep he brought the Kingdom of God for the first time. He has eaten such things as they set before him; he has sat beside their beds of pain; he has said, 'The Kingdom of God has come to the door!' And now, of all those who occasionally stand upon that familiar doorstep, none are more honoured, more loved, or more welcome than he.

VI

VIOLETS AND VIPERS

THERE is no doubt about it, we are living in a higgledy-piggledy world. No attempt is made to sort things out. The grocer stores his different spices in neat little drawers; the draper keeps his linens on one shelf and his serges on another; the chemist is worried to death lest his innumerable bottles should get confused; and the lawyer pigeonholes his papers in the most scrupulously careful way. But Nature laughs at all that sort of thing. Who ever went into a forest and found the gums and the wattles and the myrtles all neatly arranged in rows? Who ever clambered up the grassy hillside and found the dandelions and the sorrel and the couch-grass all parcelled off in natty little plots? No, no; Nature does not work that way. You go into the virgin bush, and everything strikes you as being extravagant, prodigal, prolific, profuse. Nature lets herself go. There is no sense

of restraint. Everything seems to be overflowing into everything else. Giant trees and tiny saplings, matted thickets and climbing creepers, twisting vines and impudent parasites, all intertwine, and interweave, and intertangle themselves in the most riotous exuberance and confusion. We are living, I say again, in a higgledy-piggledy world. I like to remind my wife of this sublime truth when her criticisms on the condition of my study exceed the bounds of Christian toleration. I simply tell her that, like the fair Yum-Yum, in Sir W. S. Gilbert's *Mikado*, 'I am a child of Nature, and take after my mother!' Nature hates your shelves, scorns your pigeon-holes, loathes your neat compartments, and abhors your natty little drawers. She abominates the sorting-out. Nature revels in the tangle every time.

I was led to these congenial and improving reflections by a sentence or two in Richard Jefferies. Richard Jefferies was one of our greatest and truest naturalists, and, being a faithful interpreter of Nature, all his books are riotous and exuberant medleys. You never know, when you read one paragraph, what the next will be about. I was reading about vipers, and suddenly I was among the violets. Such is Nature! And such, of necessity, is a naturalist. 'Vipers,' Jefferies tells us, 'have their favourite localities. So soon as the

violets push up and open their sweet-scented flowers under the first warm gleams of the spring sunshine, the snake ventures forth from his hole to bask on the south side of the bank. In looking for violets it is not unusual to hear a rustling of the dead leaves that still strew the ground, and to see the pointed tail of a snake being dragged after him under cover.' Here is Nature, then! No keeping of vipers in one drawer and violets in another, if you please! The violet department and the viper department are inextricably mixed! Nature absolutely refuses to store poison on one shelf and perfume on another. The viper is among the violets, and she declines to sort them out. And I for one like Nature all the better for it.

It is just here that I part company with the man who tells me that he does not need a church in order to worship. He finds God in Nature. We all know Ian Maclaren's friend who got more good to his soul out of one glorious sunset than out of all the sermons he had ever heard. My only criticism of this man is that he is so obviously disingenuous and dishonest. He *says* that he finds God in Nature. But he *means* nothing of the kind. He practises a doctrine of mental reserve of a worse kind than is to be found in any other school of casuistry. He says that he finds God in *Nature*. He means that he finds God in *violets*. But Nature is not

violets. Nature consists of *violets and vipers*. He finds God in the fragrance of the flowers, in the songs of the birds, in the verdure of the hills, in the shimmer of the lake, in the rainbow of the cataract, in the glory of the sunset, and in the twinkling of the stars. But see what he has done! He calls himself a Nature-worshipper, and yet he does the very thing that Nature most abhors! He has become a sorter-out. He has been picking and choosing on the most fastidious principle. He has been gathering all Nature's violets and ignoring all Nature's vipers. But he must not, dare not, shall not, ignore the vipers. Nature is as fond of her vipers as of her violets; and he insults Nature, under the guise of worshipping her, when he plunges into ecstasies about her violets and is ashamed of her vipers. I protest that it is the climax of unfairness, dishonesty, and hypocrisy. To be perfectly honest he must worship, not only the subtle fragrance of the violets, but the horrible fangs of the viper. He must worship, not only the delightful trill of the lark, but the blooded beak of the vulture. He must worship, not only the tender grace of the gazelle, but the dripping tusks of the wolf. He must worship, not only the lightsome bound of the hare, but the frightful teeth of the alligator! And why worship Nature only in the sunshine and in the spring-time? Is the sun that shimmers on the

lake and fills the glade with song more a part of Nature than the storm that drenches him to the skin and condemns him to a fortnight's rheumatism and influenza? Why does he go out on his Nature-worship in spring and summer only? And on fine days only? It is because the passion for the pigeon-hole has got into his very blood. If he only knew it, the instinct of the neat little drawers and the labelled shelves is stronger within him than the love of Nature! And so he has the brazen effrontery to sit down in the presence of Nature, who hates these ridiculous contrivances, and under her very eyes he proceeds with his picking and choosing, his sifting and sorting; and when he comes back he raves about the sweetness of the violets. And Nature scowls at him and is wounded, for her wet days are just as dear to her as her fine days, her winters as her summers, her vipers as her violets. You touch a mother in a very tender spot when you praise one of her children and despise the other.

It is really very wonderful how inextricably the violets have got mixed up with the vipers in this higgledy-piggledy world! Look on this exquisite little painting, executed by Miss Diana Eaton, eldest daughter of the Honourable Mr. Eaton. It is a dainty sketch in water colours of Phoebe Crowhurst's cottage near Abchurch. It hangs, as Mark

Rutherford tells us, in the great drawing-room at the hall, and is considered most picturesque.

'Lovely! What a dear old place!' said the guests.

'It makes one quite enamoured of the country,' exclaimed Lady Fanshawe, one of the most determined diners-out in Mayfair. 'I never look at a scene like that without wishing I could give up London altogether! I am sure I could be content. It would be so charming to get rid of conventionality and be perfectly natural. You really ought to send real drawings to the Academy, Miss Eaton!'

Here are VIOLETS!

And yet, in reality, the romantic little cottage was a wretched, insanitary little hovel in which neither health nor comfort were possible. The room in which Phoebe died of consumption had no fireplace, and great patches of plaster had been brought down by the rain. Just underneath her window was the pig-sty!

Here are VIPERS!

Mark Rutherford gets angry! 'That we should take pleasure,' he says, 'in pictures of filthy, ruined hovels in which health and even virtue are impossible! It is more than strange that people should go into sham ecstasies over one of these pig-sties, should give a thousand pounds for its light and shade, while inside the *real* sty, at the very moment

when the auctioneer knocks down the drawing amidst applause, lies the mother dying of dirt fever; the mother of six children starving and sleeping there—starving, save for the parish allowance, for the snow is on the ground and the father is out of work!'

Here are VIOLETS AND VIPERS!

The same bewildering admixture of violets and vipers meets us at every turn. What a world this would be without love! Take the sex element out of literature and out of life, and what have you left? Those surging and tumultuous emotions which man and maid awaken in each other's breasts represent the furnace-fire by which all the machinery of the world is driven. Men and women have been purified and sanctified and glorified by love. It is by loving and mating that homes are built and earth becomes flooded with heaven. There is no bed of violets in all the Edens of the world so fair, so fragrant, and so sweet as this. And yet even as we stoop to pluck the lovely blooms, and to inhale their delicious odour, we hear that horrid 'rustling among the dead leaves, and see the pointed tail of a snake dragged after him under cover.' There is no stern fact in life more heartrending and tragic than this incongruous medley. The vipers of lust lurk among the violets of love, and many a happy home has been suddenly darkened with a terrible

shame, and has found its blithest merriment turned into bitterest moaning, because one soft white hand in stooping to pluck the sweetest blossoms, was seized in a flash by the pitiless fangs.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne has shown how, at still another point, the violets hide the vipers. He says:

War
I abhor,
And yet how sweet
The sound along the marching street
Of drum and fife! And I forget
Wet eyes of widows, and forget
Broken old mothers, and the whole
Dark butchery without a soul.
Without a soul—save this bright drink
Of heady music, sweet as death;
And e'en my peace-abiding feet
Go marching with the marching street,
For yonder, yonder goes the fife,
And what care I for human life?
The tears fill my astonished eyes,
And my full heart is like to break;
And yet 'tis all embannered lies,
A dream those little drummers make.
Oh, it is wickedness to clothe
Yon hideous, grinning thing, that stalks
Hidden in music, like a queen
That in a garden of glory walks,
Till good men love the thing they loathe!
Art, thou hast many infamies,
But not an infamy like this.
Oh, snap the fife and still the drum,
And show the monster as she is!

Nor are there many things in life more truly delightful than the social instinct, the love of comradeship and conviviality, the fondness for intercourse and hospitality, that led to the establishment of the inn. 'Never,' says Macaulay, 'was an Englishman more at home than when he took his ease in his inn. He seems to have thought that that comfort and freedom could in no other place be enjoyed in equal perfection. The feeling continued during many generations to be a national peculiarity. The liberty and jollity of inns long furnished matter to our novelists and dramatists. Johnson declared that a tavern chair was the throne of human felicity, and Shenstone gently complained that no private roof, however friendly, gave the wanderer so warm a welcome as that which was to be found at an inn.' The spirit of all this was very human, and very genial and altogether good. And yet out of that violet-bed there has crept an evil which has bitten like a serpent and stung like an adder.

But as I rest my pen for a second, and lean back in my chair, my eye turns away from this tangled forest, this tumble-down cottage, this stricken home, this martial music, this cheery inn, and, like a searchlight, it sweeps the inmost recesses of my own soul. I discover that I myself am neither all violets nor all vipers. No man is.

Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote in a birthday album:

> There is so much good in the worst of us,
> And so much bad in the best of us,
> That it ill becomes any one of us
> To talk about the rest of us!

'What are little girls made of?' we used to ask, and, if I remember rightly, the question was answered in two different ways, according to the sex of the answerer. But it need not have been. We are all made of violets and vipers. However many violets you may grow in your soul, be sure that you may hear the deadly rustle and see the flash of the reptile's tail if you listen and look long enough. Nor is any man a nest of vipers. Does not Suetonius tell us that whilst all Rome yelled with delight that Nero, the hated Emperor, was dead, one gentle lady was seen to come again and again and reverently strew flowers upon his tomb. Those violets on the dead man's sepulchre denoted some violets in the dead man's soul.

I am afraid my wife is right after all. It would be a sign of grace in me if I kept my study tidy. It is true that Nature loves a medley, and mixes her violets and vipers everywhere. But I am under a loftier authority and subject to a higher realm. Yum-Yum may be a child of Nature and take after

her mother, but I am a child of Grace and must display the hereditary marks of that exalted lineage. Grace makes no room for the viper. She would have my heart and home—and the world itself—to be a bed of sweetest violets, undisturbed by that horrid rustle and the loathsome glitter of scales. Nature hates the sorter and sifter, the picker and chooser. But Grace loves him. And so, for the rest of my days, I am going to tidy the world up a bit if I can. The high art of living consists very largely in driving the vipers from the violet-beds.

VII

TIFFS

A FRIEND and I found ourselves standing the other day before a fine picture by G. T. Pinwell in the Melbourne Art Gallery. It is entitled 'Out of Tune.' It represents two lovers whose honeyed hours have been temporarily embittered. I say 'temporarily' advisedly, for, although Mr. Pinwell's picture does not forecast the future, any one with half an eye can see how it will all end. 'Tiffs,' as Principal P. T. Forsyth says in his book on *Marriage*, 'are not tragedies. It is childish, as soon as the clouds begin to drop, to think that heaven is burst. A happy marriage depends on the way these things are handled, and not on their entire absence. And a mistake is not irreparable.' There is some comfort in that, but I am afraid that the statement is too sweeping. It requires some modification. 'Tiffs are not tragedies,' says the Principal. But they may be, and very often

they are. 'A happy marriage depends on the way these things are handled,' says Dr. Forsyth. It also depends on the way these things come about. We must not generalize.

There are two kinds of tiffs. There are tiffs that are like the cracking of delicate and costly vases. The damage is final; it is absolutely incapable of repair. And there are tiffs that are like the breaking of bones; exceedingly painful at the time, but eventually leaving the limb stronger than before. We remember the Archbishop of York's speech in Shakespeare:

> Our peace will, like a broken limb united,
> Grow stronger for the breaking.

There is all the difference in the world between the broken vase and the broken bone, and any philosophy that treats the two kinds of tiffs in the same way is like the doctor who, ignoring their varying maladies, prescribes the same formula for all his patients. The distinction between the tiffs that are like the broken vase and the tiffs that are like the broken bone is an ethical one. Two lovers find themselves, like the lovers in the picture, 'Out of Tune.' He promised to be at her door at seven to take her out for the evening. It is twenty past when he arrived. Poor, petted

little Dorothy has worked herself into a frenzy of impatience and suspicion. She stamps her dainty foot in queenly wrath. And when he at length arrives, poor George can only explain that he has been delayed by having to take Maisie to the station.

'But you had no business to take Maisie to the station when you knew that I was waiting for you here!' exclaims Dorothy petulantly. 'You must be more fond of her than you are of me!'

'Nonsense, dear,' replies George. 'Maisie's cab had failed her, and unless I had taken her to the station Maisie would have missed her train, and perhaps her trip. It was the least that a gentleman could do.'

I say that anybody can see how this will end. Poor, ruffled Dorothy will grow calm again, and her sweet little self will shine out after tears like sunshine after rain. George will recognize that, however innocently, he was not altogether free from blame. He will be very penitent. And she will be very gracious. A scene will follow that would require the pen of a seasoned novelist—a lady novelist for preference—adequately to describe; and George and Dorothy will have a delightful evening after all. The tiff is like a broken bone, and the limb is stronger after the healing.

But there are cases like the broken vase The

distinction is fundamental, and is, as I have said, a moral one. There are cases in which, when the breach occurs, a terrible moral deficiency is revealed. One party discovers in the other a certain want of truthfulness, a disconcerting lack of straightforwardness, a perilous approach to casuistry or deception. They may shake hands and be friends; they may 'kiss and make up'; but the tiff in this case is a tragedy. It is not the breaking of a bone. It is the breaking of a vase. Things can never be as they were. The discoverer of the flaw will be perpetually haunted by embarrassing suspicions of the other. There will be an absence of that perfect trustfulness, that restful confidence, on which true friendship is always based. The traveller who, in gazing into the depths of a dark abyss, sees the slowly moving folds of a hideous serpent uncoiling in the darkness has not made a more terrible discovery than has he who, peering into the yawning chasm that separates him from his friend, beholds there a sinuous subtlety that will shatter his trust for evermore.

But there is more than this to be said. For there are great principles at work which make tiffs impossible, or at least ensure their healing, like the broken bone, if a break should perchance occur. The love that bound our imaginary George and Dorothy together, and the perfect sincerity and

integrity of each, made it impossible for a tiff to be more than a splash on the surface of their affection. Their love and their honour ensured them against anything but a passing breeze. And as long as love and honour and trustfulness hold their own, no tiff can by any possibility become a tragedy. We remember Charles Kingsley's story of the two monks. They had lived together all their lives in a cave remote from the common haunts of men. At last, tired of the monotony of their quiet life, one of them made the suggestion that they should vary it by quarrelling after the fashion of the world. But the monk to whom the suggestion was made said, 'Brother, we have nothing to quarrel about. How can we change our life? What have we to wrangle over?' 'We will take this stone,' replied the other, 'and we will lay it down between us. And I will say, This stone is *mine*. And you will say, No, the stone is *mine*. And so we will quarrel after the way of the world.' So they took the stone and laid it down between them, and the first monk said, 'This stone is *mine*.' The second monk said hesitatingly, '*I think, brother, the stone is mine.*' 'Oh, very well,' said the monk who had suggested the quarrel, '*if the stone is thine, take it!*' Here is a positive principle at work in the lives of these two men, a principle which makes a tiff impossible. They *cannot* quarrel, even if they

try. And even if a tiff had occurred, the operation of that principle would have ensured an almost instant reconciliation.

But suppose that principle to be absent. In *The Luggage of Life*, I have quoted in full two stories. There is Robert Louis Stevenson's story of the two old ladies in Edinburgh who for years shared the same room night and day without speaking to, or even glancing at, each other. And there is Herbert Vivian's story of the two Bernardine nuns —bosom friends—who lived for years in adjoining cells, able to hear each other breathing, but never, never speaking. And the American press is at this moment telling of a man who has just died at the age of ninety-two. He had passed the greater part of his lifetime as a hermit, living on an island in the Mystic River, near New London. When young men, he and his brother were rivals for the hand of a neighbour's daughter. They were both rejected, and their rivalry and disappointment left them at enmity with one another and with society. They divided in two the island which they inherited from their father. Each settled on his own portion, and they lived thus, almost side by side, for over fifty years, having no intercourse with each other, and as little as possible with the rest of the world. Now here are three tiffs which became tragedies, And in each case the tiff became a tragedy not so

much through the actual presence of some moral defect or obliquity, but rather through the absence of such positive principles as those which, in George and Dorothy, and in Kingsley's two monks, secured their friendship against shipwreck.

I cannot help thinking that a good deal that I have said applies as much to nations as to individuals. We get in the way of thinking of empires as stately and dignified and impressive. But in reality nations behave very much like children, and tiffs easily occur. Did not Japan sulk for more than two hundred years and close her ports against the commerce of the world? And is not the present rivalry in armaments between Great Britain and Germany reminiscent of things we used to hear on the playground?

'If you build a Dreadnought I shall build two—*see!*' cries Miss Britannia to Miss Germanica defiantly.

'I don't care!' retorts Miss Germanica. 'If you build two I shall build four—*so there!*'

And so the crazy competition goes on! Somebody has said that war will be eventually rendered impossible by a quickened sense of humour. We shall see that tiffs are not tragedies so much as comedies. We smile at the storm that rages between George and Dorothy. We think the quarrel between Stevenson's Edinburgh ladies quite grotesque. Mrs.

Perugini, the daughter of Dickens, tells us that it was the sense of the ridiculous that led Thackeray and Dickens to end their tiff. 'One day,' she says, 'while paying me a visit, Thackeray suddenly spoke: "It is ridiculous that your father and I should be placed in a position of positive enmity towards one another."

'"It is quite ridiculous," said I, with emphasis

'There was a pause that lasted quite a long time.

'"And how do I know he would be nice to me?" mused Thackeray presently.

'"Oh, I can answer for him," said I joyfully "There is no need for me even to tell him what has passed between us; I shall not say a word. Try him, dear Mr. Thackeray, only try him, and you will see."

'And later on Thackeray did try him, and came to our house with radiant face to tell me the result.

'Thackeray's eyes were very kind as he said quite simply, "I met him at the Athenaeum Club and held out my hand, saying we had been foolish long enough—or words to that effect; your father grasped it very cordially—and—and we are friends again, thank God!"'

We wake up sooner or later to see that our sulks are very silly, and the sense of humour saves us. And surely the same instinct will abolish war! Mr. H. G. Wells, in his *First Men in the Moon*, tells

us how his hero got slain at last. When he could talk the language of the Moon-men, he told them of all the wonders of the earth. They were entranced and delighted. But then he made his huge mistake. He told them of war. He described our armies and navies; our manœuvres and battles; our sieges and assaults; our routs and surprises; our invasions and massacres; our ironclads and torpedoes. When the Moon-men heard all this they gasped in terror. They concluded that the world in which men tore each other to pieces on such a tremendous scale must be a world of maniacs. They thought it unsafe to allow a citizen of such a bloodthirsty planet to roam at large about their peaceful world. And so they killed him. And, really, there does seem to be something in their way of looking at things. War, to say the least of it, is very ridiculous. Surely there must be enough sound sense and strong sanity and sober sagacity in European statesmanship to make war a ludicrous impossibility at this stage of the world's career![1] Surely our sense of humour will wake up some day and we shall laugh these tremendous tiffs off the face of the earth! If Great Britain, the land of Wyclif, and Germany, the land of Luther, have caught anything

[1] This passage was written before the outbreak of war with Germany in August, 1914. Sound sense and sober sagacity failed to stem the tide of war, though Sir Edward Grey did all that was in the power of man to avert hostilities.

of the spirit of the prophets who have made them great, it will be as impossible for them to quarrel as it was for Kingsley's monks.

I should like to have said a word concerning the tiffs that sometimes occur between men and life itself. The suicide, the pessimist, and the misanthrope have all taken the huff with life in general and with their own lives in particular. These tiffs are among the saddest of all. Jesus Himself was painfully impressed by the sulkiness of men. There were certain children in the market-place who, when the game of weddings was proposed, danced as soon as their companions piped. There were others who, when the game of funerals was suggested, wailed as soon as their companions mourned. But there was a third class. There were those who complained that weddings were far too gay, and that funerals were far too glum. They would respond niether to the piping nor to the mourning. It was unto these peevish and petulant children that Jesus likened the men of His generation. Like the children who would not play at funerals, they would not respond to John, who came fasting. And, like the children who would not play at weddings, they would not respond to Jesus, who came feasting. This third class represents the Church's everlasting problem. There are those who are impressed by a stately liturgy and an ornate ritual. There are

others again who are only affected by severe and Puritanical simplicity. But what of those who respond to *neither*? There are those who are allured by the wooing note of Barnabas; and there are others, too, who are alarmed by the warning note of Boanerges. But what of those who can be neither coaxed nor cowed? That is the problem that breaks a minister's heart. It broke the heart of Jesus.

Yes, tiffs may quite easily be tragedies—domestic, national, spiritual tragedies. And there is an estrangement that every good man fears.

> Only a smile, yes, only a smile,
> That a woman o'erburdened with grief
> Expected from me; 'twould have given relief,
> For her heart ached sore the while.
> But, weary and cheerless, she went her way,
> Because, as it happened, that very day,
> I was out of touch with my Lord.

'Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him.' He fell because he was estranged from the Divine. He was out of touch with his Lord. 'I am sore distressed,' cried Saul, 'for God is departed from me and answereth me no more.' And so he sulks in his tent. There is no tiff so tragic as that!

VIII

THE BRANDED BROW

I SHALL begin this chapter with a story, and a true one at that. It was a Sunday evening. The old minister had just returned from church, and sank, tired out, into the cosy arm-chair by the fireside. His little grand-daughter, Margery, was allowed to sit up late on Sunday evenings that she might have a talk with grandpa before she went to bed. This was the treat of the week. And not to Margery alone. For the old man knew no relaxation more refreshing, after the arduous labours of the pulpit, than to take the wee girlie upon his knee and let her prattle to her heart's content. But this evening her tiny brow was clouded. A problem baffled her.

'What is it, lassie?' asked the minister.

'I've been reading about heaven, grandpa, while you were at church, and there's one thing I can't make out. My Bible says that there shall be no sickness, nor sadness, nor sighing in heaven. I

like that. And it says that those who are there shall never hunger nor thirst; and I understand that. But it says that "*His name shall be in their foreheads.*" What does that mean, grandpa? Who will write the name of Jesus on their foreheads?'

'Why, they will write it themselves, of course, girlie.'

'Write it *themselves*, grandpa! But how?'

'Why, Margery, we are every day writing the names of our masters on our foreheads. Some people make a sad mistake and serve sin, and sin stamps its seal on their faces. Some serve care, and care brands their foreheads with deep wrinkles. Health, anger, hate, love, jealousy, joy, all set their mark upon the faces of those who follow them. And those who love the Lord Jesus, Margery, and walk with Him, and do His will, write the name of their dear Master in their foreheads. They cannot help it.'

And Margery looked silently, wonderingly, up into her grandfather's face. She glanced at the shock of grey hair that, like a crown of glory, circled the old man's brow. She looked into the deep and kindly eyes, still glowing with the enthusiasm which the pulpit had inflamed. She gazed tenderly upon that splendid face and massive forehead, so expressive to her of everything that was noble and beautiful and true. And then she cried,

'I think I understand now, grandpa!' flung her arms about his neck, kissed him, and scampered off to bed.

Margery had solved a profound problem.

There is nothing arbitrary or artificial about that process. It is perfectly natural and easy and simple. The brand upon the brow is not placed there by others. We grave it ourselves. We choose the lords who shall have dominion over us; and everything else comes as a matter of course. Passion or purity, love or hate—serve whom you will; but in process of time the name of your lord shall be found in your forehead.

And now, having told my story, and pointed my moral—in the most orthodox and approved fashion—I shall subpoena a pair of witnesses. The first shall be an eminent photographer, and the second a famous beauty specialist. The eminent photographer is Mr. Mendelssohn, of London, who has been taking the public into his confidence. In the course of a most readable article, he says that 'one of the best evidences for religion is the type of face that the essentially religious life produces.' Now think of that for a moment, as coming from a professional student of physiognomy. 'One of the best evidences for religion is the type of face that the essentially religious life produces.' Have we not here a rare sidelight on the text that puzzled

little Margery? '*His name shall be in their foreheads.*' Of course it shall.

Now for the beauty specialist. He was asked the other day how to make the mouth truly beautiful, and to keep its lines perfect, and this was his reply. 'No mouth,' he said, 'can show chronic discontent and fretfulness, and retain the slightest claim to good looks. Many women don't realize it, but the mouth is the most expressive feature of the face. Character marks it as it marks no other feature. Of course, a girl can't change her whole personality, but she can look in the glass every day and say, "Am I getting set, cross lines about my mouth? Has it a drooping, discontented expression?" If so, she can conquer that expression, and maybe, in doing so, she will get rid of some of the discontent that causes it. I'm not talking now about the "noble discontent" with evils that can be remedied—*that* doesn't bring ugly lines—but of the morbid, useless discontent some girls cherish. There is small use in applying toilet creams, massage, and all that, if a girl permits her mouth to take on the lines of morbid discontent. I say this, although I make my living by those same toilet creams and massages.'

Now have not these two witnesses—the photographer and the masseur—amply verified the exposition which the old minister gave to little Margery?

Do we not choose the lords that shall have dominion over us, and straightway grave their names upon our foreheads? There is no doubt about it.

I was writing in this strain when I picked up, quite casually, a copy of the *Missionary Herald* I was soon arrested by an article by Miss Shekleton on 'The Uplift of Women in China.' She writes most graphically of the physical transformation which the love of Christ can bring about on the clouded faces of China's daughters. And, in support of her own statement, she quotes from 'a critical non-missionary outsider.' In *Changing China*, this gentleman writes:

'The radiant peace and uplift of soul I have seen on some Christian faces reveal what a moral treasure the Chinese have kept locked up all these centuries.

'I do not wonder that villagers took a certain saintly woman to be "some relative of God." As in foot unbinding, so in mind unbinding, the missionaries have been the pioneers.

'To judge from the beatific expression on the faces of certain converts I have met, the gospel means to them what the opening of the hatches of a captured slave-ship meant to the wretches pent up in its hold.'

But we have strayed a long way from home. We need not have gone to China. Principal Forsyth

says that Roman Catholicism develops a certain peculiar cast of face that can be picked out on the street. And surely every minister and every city missionary—if they have worked with their eyes wide open—can recall countless instances of a very gracious and very wonderful spiritual phenomenon. At the Water Street Mission, New York, the photographs of converts are preserved. And in the published record of that marvellous work a number of them are reproduced side by side with the same faces photographed five or ten years later. The change is amazing, almost incredible. What has happened? Simply this: His name is written in their foreheads. That is all.

'Did you,' asks Dr. Alexander Whyte, of Edinburgh, in commenting upon the shining face of Moses, 'did you ever happen to pass a looking-glass as you rose off your knees after an unusually long or unusually close season alone with God? Then you must have been startled and delighted to see that your plain, dull, old, haggard face was for the moment positively youthful and beautiful. Or, again, you must often have seen two young lovers just parting, and, as one of them passed you, you turned and looked after him, for his face so shone out upon you. It was the light of heaven that filled his heart, coming out at his face. In Paradise, Dante tells us, the more they love the more they

shine. In heaven you will recognize and discover the great lovers of God and of man by the exquisite beauty of their faces.' '*His name shall be in their foreheads.*'

Now I was not quite sure whether these two great teachers—Dante and Dr. Whyte—meant me to take this matter of *loving hearts* and *shining faces* literally. And just as the problem was simmering in my mind, I came upon a striking passage in a novel. In Miss Myrtle Reed's *Spinner in the Sun,* we are told of the awakening of the soul of Araminta. She suddenly discovers that she loves Dr. Ralph Dexter, and that, contrary to all that she has been taught, love is pure and sweet and good. She rushes to the doctor's house. '"Dr. Ralph, I've come!" she cries. He looked up; then started forward. One look into *her glorified face* told him all that he needed to know.' And, a few pages farther on, I came upon this: 'She went out next day as naturally as a flower turns to the sun. It was a part of the magic beauty of the world that she should meet Ralph, just outside the gate, with *a face as radiant as her own.*' Those sentences seem to fortify powerfully Dr. Whyte's contention. And they certainly illuminate Margery's text.

I began with a true story. I shall close with one. It happened one day that a party of monks were

studying the Book of Revelation. When the reading was completed they strolled among the trees around the monastery and discussed with each other the most enticing description of heaven that the glowing chapters contained.

'I like this,' said an aged brother, who had known great grief: '"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."'

'And I should choose this,' exclaimed another, who knew what it was to wage constant warfare against the evil forces within: '"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me on My throne."'

'Ah,' said a quiet young monk who had not yet spoken, 'but there is none equal to this: "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face, and *His name shall be in their forehead.*"'

That quiet young monk was Thomas à Kempis, whose *Imitation of Christ* stands for all time as one of the chiefest treasures of the Church's devotional literature. Thomas à Kempis knew what it was to have been initiated into the Brotherhood of the Branded Brow.

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